

Blacksmith Saga: Dragon Trainer Naruto

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Summary: Naruto had a job before he joined ninja academy. He was the apprentice to the only blacksmith in Konoha. As a blacksmith to a village of both civilian and shinobi standards, Naruto had to know a bit more than metal working. One day, while testing a hunting tool he'd built when he was bored, Naruto caught something that wasn't the hunt he was aiming for. Smart/Strong!Naruto

1. Chapter 1

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The Blacksmith Saga: Book One

Dragon Trainer Naruto

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Chapter One

He'd had a dream about creating the perfect sword for him to wield for himself before waking. The blade glinting from the firelight of the oven used for melting metals turning into the rising sunlight peeking through his window curtains, shining on his sleepy face.

The boy looking about the age of ten, with hair as golden yellow as the sun, rubbed his eyes tiredly, eyes of a blue color that could rival the oceans. Yawning and stretching, the whisker-like birthmarks on his face making him look even more like a woken cat, he sat up scratching the back of his head before looking at the clock on his dresser. He'd woken an hour earlier than he'd wanted to, but he knew he wasn't about to fall asleep again any time soon.

After stretching a bit, he went into doing a series of

push-ups, crunches, sit-ups, kicks, and punches for an hour. His morning routine exercise. Pulling off his white t-shirt and boxers and putting them in the corner so he'd know to wash them when he got back home, he went to the bathroom to shower. Ten minutes later, feeling a bit more awake, he dressed into some washed out jeans, a black t-shirt, and a brown hoodie before going to the kitchen. Frying up some eggs, bacon, and sliced tomatoes, cooking some rice, and making toast, Naruto set down his plates and bowls with a glass of orange juice and a glass of milk to start his day.

The only sounds to be heard was the bubbling and sizzling of his breakfast in the kitchen and the muffled morning hustle and bustle outside.

He was used to the quiet, growing up alone.

Don't get him wrong, being the only person living in a large vacant apartment complex came in handy most of the time. Especially since the old man Hokage let him turn the roof into his own private garden and greenhouse so he didn't have to pay for the overly priced food that was, most of the time, rotten from the only places, aside from Ichiraku's Ramen Stand and Akimichi's Restaurant, to sell him food. Hunting and fishing he could do just fine for meat. The only things he really had to buy were things he couldn't really get in the wild and/or make himself. So he bought or traded for such things from the Akimichi's restaurant/grocer at a much more reasonable price than what the grocer's or other food stands would charge him.

When he can't get things from the Akimichi's or Ichiraku's, on rare occasions, he steals from the food stands since grocers won't even let him in through the doors. Old man Hokage even gave him permission to do so and told him to think of it as stealth training.

After a couple of villagers tried and failed to convince the blonde that "All the cool ninjas wear orange!" when he was younger, the clothes on Naruto's back and in his closet and dresser were given to him from old man Hokage, a small number of ANBU he only knew by mask, and Daisuke Yakedo the village Blacksmith, whom Naruto's apprenticed under for money. Well, while being a blacksmith was the young blonde's job, it was more like a hobby for him. A proud hobby with a hint of "life's work".

After finishing breakfast and cleaning his dishes, Naruto slipped on a pair of thick brown gloves that went up to his elbows, his green goggles on his forehead that still looked a bit big for his face but the resizing strap took care of that, thick brown leather boots that came up to his knees, and the strap of a cloth satchel**[A/N:Like from **_**I am Legend**_**] **carrying all his tools, journal, and sketchbooks over his shoulder before heading out.

Sure, it was an Academy day, but that never stopped Naruto before.

He learned more outside school under the blacksmith's tutelage as well as some ANBU in one day than what the teachers, aside from Iruka, would be willing to teach him within two weeks. Most of the time people who either weren't ninjas or weren't one of the older, higher ranked, or more experienced ninjas ignored his existence. He had never found out why. After he started working for old man Daisuke when he was about six, nearly seven, he stopped caring.

He was too busy taking care of himself and learning to do things by himself to care.

Naruto would ask for help from those he knew would actually help when he needed it, but most of the time he liked doing things on his own.

Being a blacksmith to a village of both civilian and shinobi standards, Naruto had to learn the more difficult chakra control exercises, especially with the massive amount of chakra he has, for the times he had to focus chakra into the weapon(s) he's making for ninjas. Kids start going to Ninja Academy around the ages of eight and nine and even at the academy, the only chakra control they teach is leaf balancing on the forehead to stick and advanced leaf balancing to make the leaf float or hover above your head. You've completed the advanced leaf balancing when your leaf is a foot above your head.

Naruto was several chakra control exercises ahead of even the top graduates when he started at the academy.

Naruto's chakra reserves, he'd learned about a week after he stopped asking teachers to help him and started asking Daisuke for advice, were too large to focus into even doing the simplest of ninja techniques. The only ones he couldn't do now were jutsu's that were of the simple illusions, including clone jutsu, because they needed the smallest amount of chakra. The smallest amount of chakra Naruto could focus into a jutsu could provide enough chakra for the average civilian turned shinobi, children that come from civilian families, with the ability to do a ChÅ«nin level body-flicker technique. That example is only because while chakra reserves can grow, the average civilian child turned shinobi starts with about one-half or one-third the chakra reserves an average shinobi child starts with. Both type of children having very little control on the amount of chakra they have in the beginning.

Naruto started at the academy with Elite Jounin level amount of chakra. And that was just with what he could control.

Another thing he had to learn earlier than most kids in the academy were seals and how to use them. Like the chakra control needed for making some ninja weapons, seals were needed for such weapons as well. Sealing scrolls were more than useful when Naruto needed to hunt and gather things and sometimes when stealing things too. He got quickly interested in seals and has all the books on them as the Hokage could provide for him. Seals came as easy as breathing for Naruto. When Naruto first asked for a book on seals from the village leader, the old man couldn't help smiling and handed him a beginner's guide to sealing with a spiral on the spine like the spiral in the middle of the Leaf Village symbol.

"That book is your birthright." The old fire shadow had said with a smile. "That, as well as nearly all the books I have on Fuinjutsu: Art of Sealing, was from your mother and her home village of Whirlpool. The other books are in a scroll I have ready to give you when you've finished that book and have learned all you need to of the basics. Just remember, Naruto, you can learn a lot from just the basics by themselves."

He was right of course, but that didn't stop Naruto from taking the scroll a month and a half later when he'd memorized the beginner's manual and had successfully used the basic seals the book provided him with.

Now, back to where the old man mentioned Naruto's mother, Naruto knew all there was to know about his mother including how she was one of the sole survivors of Whirlpool Village and how close ties Whirlpool had with the Leaf due to the Uzumaki Clan and Senju Clan being distant relatives.

Naruto's father, on the other hand, was another story entirely.

Sure, Naruto wasn't told anything about his father but when he was five, he had confirmed privately with the old fire shadow he knew by pointing at the Fourth Hokage's picture in the Hokage's office stating, "How can no one know who my father is, I look just like him for Kami's sake!"

But he knew he had to keep it a secret for the very reasons he was not told directly in the first place.

Protection.

Naruto wants to be strong enough to protect himself. He likes being a blacksmith. Sure, he'd always dreamed of being Hokage and he still does from time to time, but becoming Hokage isn't his only goal anymore, it was just one of the things at the top of the ladder he needed to climb to reach the top. He was going to become a Seal Master, an elite through hard work and determination, he was going to prove he was not someone the villagers or kids in the academy could push around and ignore any longer, he was an artist with metal, he was an inventor, he was creative and he was going to put his creativity to good use... He was going to be a ninja and graduate as Rookie of the Year no matter what the teachers, aside from Iruka, were going to do to try and stop him. He'd be a great ninja... but he was first and foremost a blacksmith.

He'd walked through the village to the blacksmith workshop looking through his seal sketchbook over a seal he'd made himself but hadn't tested. This seal was to work like the ones made for sealing scrolls only the thing sealed is a jutsu. It would work well for traps. He'd already created a minor and less effective seal similar only instead of a jutsu, it was a sealed paint bomb, with all the paint explosion but no traceable evidence of the paint bomb ever being in place seeing as the seal disappears as soon as it is released.

Sure, he hadn't cared what the villagers thought about him in years, but that didn't mean he'd truly quit with the pranks. They were great for trap setting practice. Best part, no one could prove it was him. The last outrageous prank he pulled, before he went to only pranking those who deserved it, was the time he graffitied the Hokage Monument in broad daylight soon after his fifth birthday.

Naruto stopped his musing when he noticed he was already in front of the workshop when he saw the sign to Yakedo's Weapons Shop.

Putting away his sketchbook to study again later, he walked into the workshop, "Hey, Daisuke, you in here?" He called.

"Naruto? You're nearly an hour early." A strong elderly but slightly rough sounding voice answered.

"I woke up an hour early and figure, what the hell, I'll come into work early. It's better than the academy, that's for sure. Where are you?" Naruto asked making his way through the shop.

"I'm out back testing some of the weapons!" Daisuke called back.

Naruto smiled with a nod and gave a halfhearted roll of his eyes, "Shoulda known." He mutters to himself.

Naruto hurried through the workshop just in time to see the blade of a black sickle with chain hit one of the five targets standing grounded across the yard under five other smaller targets hanging on a wire. The thrower holding the other end of the chain being an elderly man with half-inch short white hair and an equally short white beard with circular glasses, in a long sleeved tea green haori and faded brown trousers, a left brown boot, and a slightly squeaky springed and hinged metal replacement foot for the right one he'd lost.

Decades ago, people would say Daisuke Yakedo was one of the top ninja with samurai sword skill out there. What most people didn't get was that, that hadn't changed in the least when he'd lost his foot. He fought with the best of them, against the best of them, and he'd lost his leg when he, like several of the more noble shinobi around, fought for the life of a friend rather than the sake of succeeding a mission. While the wiser and more experience half of the shinobi council knew that even without his foot he was still in his prime, the less experienced and "logic beats hope and possibilities" minded shinobi half along with the civilian half of the council voted that it was time Daisuke retire his shinobi status at the age of thirty-two. He'd even built himself a new foot to show them it didn't matter, but those on the council who'd voted against him wouldn't budge.

So Daisuke made a career in his skill of weapon making and became a blacksmith.

Naruto whistled appreciatively as Daisuke gave a yank on the chain to release the sickle from the target and reeled it back towards him with the chain. "That sickle with chain ordered or pleasure project?"

"Pleasure!" Daisuke said with a big and proud smile as he made his way over the the targets to retrieve the other end of his work. "Speaking of pleasure projects, what was it you wanted to show me when you were working with the that extra long roped six weight bola weapon?"

"I put it in the shed." Naruto said making his way to the far right side of the yard to a large gray barn Daisuke used as a weapons material shed.

In the what-used-to-be-a-barn, was where Daisuke and Naruto kept all the materials for weapon making whether it be metal, special materials to make metal, wood, or really as much of anything that

could be made into a weapon in store. Unless offered an idea or asked if it could be provided, no one aside from Daisuke and Naruto knew what kind of materials were in the shed. Not even Daisuke's granddaughter Tenten.

Unlocking and unsealing the shed doors of the traps and such set up to keep any unwanted guests out and more, Naruto lead Daisuke to a corner with something kept covered by a large cloth and uncovered it, revealing a wooden canon type looking thing with two wheels and two wooden legs also to be used as handles, but there was no flare to light or hole to shoot a canon ball.

"Now keep in mind, I only made this because I was bored." Naruto said honestly. "Though the mechanisms for this could be used for other things."

"What is it?" Daisuke asked with a raised eyebrow.

"A bola launcher. Here, I'll show you." Naruto said picking up the legs and rolling it out to the yard to face the far left side of the yard and the line of ten human-shaped dummy targets. "I mostly came up with this for those hunting a bigger catch. The launcher works a little like a large crossbow tipped on it's side only there are two working together to launch one big arrow or, in this case, bola. See, with a bola you have to spin it so you can throw it to capture the target. The faster you spin and the harder you throw it, the quicker the catch and more of a tangle the catch will be in. With the launcher I built, all you have to do is aim and fire and you got it. I haven't really tested it though."

"Well, test it on the dummies, and later after work today, you can test it hunting." Daisuke encouraged.

Naruto gave a nod before opening up the launcher and pulling up and back and folded out into place a slightly long cylinder with a ring to look through on top between two halves of a large crossbow pointing up and aimed the launcher at one of the two middle dummies staked deeply in the ground. Narrowing his eyes slightly, Naruto pulled the trigger and the bola flew fast and hard at the dummy, wrapping around it several times, and having hit it so hard, the dummy was tipped a few inches backwards.

Giving a loud bark of a laugh and a congratulatory clap on Naruto's shoulder. "Good job. Now put it to the side and let's get to work. We got another order of shurikan and kunai for the academy."

"Starters or graduates?" Naruto questioned as he folded the launcher back up.

"Starters. The bronze is already in the shop."

Heading into the shop and putting on their welding aprons then setting up their tools, the two got to work. Bronze was a more breakable and heavier metal so it was made for the younger students in the academy for training, iron for older as it was lighter and more durable. That wasn't to say that Daisuke and Naruto did this because they believed the material of the weapon defined the skill or class of the weapon's wielder, it was just how the academy ordered it. They figured it was better though seeing as having the younger students train with heavier shurikan and kunai would be improving

their strength and aim without the students even realizing it.

Melting down the bronze, putting it into the shurikan and kunai shaped molds, cooling their creations off, and sharpening the edges was an easy task for them. Daisuke told Naruto not to worry about the delivery since he'd do it himself when they were done for the day and the classes would be long over. After finishing with the Academy's order and setting them aside in their box sets, Daisuke went to open the weapons shop and Naruto went to fixing a couple weapons sent to the shop to be fixed.

This one blade- iron, thin, simple: a jian sword with a black leather bound handle and four-sided pyramid shaped tang, used for slicing and by one with more of a speed advantage rather than strength- would've cried if it had a consciousness. The owner of this blade did not take care of it very well and Naruto wasn't judging this just by how the once straight blade was bent nearly into a bow, like a ribbon bow, lengthwise and folded in several places widthwise, but by how the blade was dull, dinged, dented, and the shine had long since faded.

Naruto felt the urge to cuss out the wielder rising, he mentally stomped it down so he could be clear headed enough to fix the blade. If not for the customer, then to at least make himself feel better. Slipping his goggles down over his eyes, he heightened the heat of the flames and got to work. He would fix this sword anew, then he would cuss out the customer when they came back to pay for the work before kindly advising they try a different weapon, one used by those with a strength advantage rather than the speed advantage required for such a blade.

The other weapon Naruto was to fix was a mechanized bo staff that when twisted in two places became a three sectioned staff. This weapon was well taken care of. The bronze colored steel outside was well shined and polished, the gold molding of a mythical fire bird, the phoenix, in flight and in flames on either end of the staff shimmered in the fire's light. The only thing that needed to be fixed was the broken chain between the top and middle of the bo staff turned three section staff. That was an easy enough fix.

Both the sword and the staff were outside works, meaning the wielders were not from Konoha.

Naruto knew the staff was for a slightly wealthy traveler staying in a village a day's cart travel, half day's ninja travel, outside Konoha. The sword, however must've come in yesterday after Daisuke already sent Naruto home. While Daisuke could've fixed the sword himself during the night, he'd probably put it off and gave it to Naruto to fix just so he could watch the young blonde cuss out the customer.

It always seemed to amuse him.

Finished with the staff, he wrapped it up and encased it within a long box only an inch or two bigger than the staff in width and length for delivery. Daisuke would either bring it to the Hokage's office for a genin team to deliver or would have a genin team pick it up right from the shop to deliver. Probably the later. Either way, a genin team would be paid for delivery and Naruto would be paid for

the work.

The sword however was simply slipped back into the sheath it came separately with. The sheath itself was also made of iron cased with black leather with the pointed end and mouth of the sheath having this extra metal plating molded with the print of a Chinese dragon for decoration. The head and wings of said dragon being the handguard of the jian while the dragons serpentine body and tail curled around the mouth of the sheath. It must've been brought in person and would be picked up personally, hence the pleasure Daisuke would take in watching a customer get cussed out by his ten year old apprentice.

It was the early afternoon pushing late now, Naruto noticed as he slipped his goggles back up to his forehead before bringing the packaged staff and sheathed sword to the weapons shop. There Daisuke was waiting with a big boulder of a man in a pale gray haori with the sleeves ripped off revealing his largely muscled and hairy arms, thick black leather straps wrapped three times around each wrist acting as mediocre wrist guards, dark gray sweat pants, faded black and slightly worn boots, he had long slick black hair tied in a pony tail at the base of his neck, sharp looking beady black eyes, a long mustache, and a short pointed beard on his chin.

"This brat is your apprentice?" The man sneered. "I'm paying you good money to fix my sword and you're telling me you had this runt do it?"

"I assure you, sir, you should not let his age lead you to think he's not capable of fixing your sword and, if my assumptions are correct, he's carrying it within it's sheath right now." Daisuke said with a light smile.

The man blinked a couple times before looking at Naruto and looking towards the sword the blonde was carrying.

Huffing a disbelieving scoff, the man looked Naruto in the eye with a challenge and said, "Fine, show me your work brat."

Holding back the strongest urge to roll his eyes, deciding to save it for later, Naruto walked past the large man and handed Daisuke the packaged staff before turning to the customer and unsheathed the sword. The sword Naruto held looked even better than what one would think was brand new. The blade was straightened, the dents, dings, and all other damage was gone like it never occurred, it was sharp enough to split a hair, and it shined so well, the man could see his reflection clear as day in the blade.

Blinking in disbelief before scoffing, "You obviously replaced the one I brought in with a new one."

"And what would be the point of that?" Naruto asked with a raised eyebrow. "Doing the job would require you to pay more than you would buying a new sword, sure, but that would be wasting our inventory. You requested the sword be fixed instead of buying a new one. Had you not known a kid was the one to fix your sword, you would've paid, taken it, and been on your way by now."

The man didn't know what to really say to that and found he could no longer meet Naruto's eye.

"Though, I'm curious." Naruto said placing the sword on the counter. "If you don't mind, I'd like to ask you three question. Maybe four, depending on your answers."

With his own eyebrow raised, the man shrugged and gave a sharp nod.

"What's your profession?" Naruto asked.

Whatever the man was expecting to be asked, it wasn't that. "I'm a bounty hunter. I usually go after bandits, sometimes rogue samurai, and even a few rogue ninja." The man said, his tone going from simply answering to slightly smug rather quickly.

"Do you know any specific sword fighting style?" Naruto asked keeping a curious tone and crossing his arms.

"Why would I need that?" The man asked back before smiling proudly and sounding a bit more smug. "I'm a good enough fighter without the sword, I just thought I'd get one to give myself more of an edge. Especially one used for speed."

"Where did you get this sword?"

"I won it from some sucker betting one of the swords he was selling against me winning in a battle royal of a brawl a few villages back." He said chest puffed out, smiling all smug, and hands on his hips.

"Okay. Here's my last question. What did you use this sword for? A replacement HAMMER!" Naruto shouted in the man face, making the man jump in surprise. "You are a person who uses your strength for your advantage. This type of sword is meant for a person with an advantage in speed. Using a sword meant for speed doesn't give you the speed! You need to earn that speed through hard work and determination! A person with a strength advantage using a sword meant for a speed advantage is like mixing fire and gunpowder, it'll all just blow up in your face! Do I need to repeat this and explain a bit clearer? You have a strength advantage and while you don't have the speed you want, it doesn't mean you can't get that speed." Naruto picked up the better-than-new sword and held it up for the customer to see. "Using a sword meant for those with the speed to use it, does not give you the advantage, it actually puts you even more at a disadvantage and this time it's against anyone your fighting, including against those where you would normally have the advantage. Your weapon is not a simple tool that makes you better fighter, your weapon is a part of you, an extension of you. It's supposed to be a reflection of you if you yourself were a weapon. Any questions?"

The man blinked. Then blinked again. "Then... what should I use?"

From the corner of Naruto's eye, Daisuke looking to be coughing in his hand to keep from laughing.

"Well, for one thing, you need a fighting style." Naruto said sheathing the sword and placing it down on the counter. "Whether it's one you want to learn or develop yourself doesn't matter, what

matters is the type of weapon or weapons that suit you and the style that suits you as well. Something that could possibly suit you much better would be a giant battle ax or, from what I saw just by the damage of the sword, a giant battle hammer."

"You have a giant battle hammer?" The man asked instantly interested.

"It was actually one of the first things I made myself after becoming an apprentice blacksmith." Naruto said, hand hold his chin in thought. "I remember Daisuke had to hire three ChÅ«nin just to lift it and take it from the workshop to the back here. Come on." Naruto said leading the man to the back of the weapons shop with the inventory.

The man stopped in his tracks when Naruto had lead him through the isles of weapons on shelves all the way to the back to find on the floor, face down was a giant hammer with a round flat face, a pickaxe-like back, a foot and a half from front to back, the face a foot wide, and the neck and handle together was five and a half feet long, three inches in width, and around the middle was a foot long metal band bolted to the wood with a third dimensional two inch wide spiral molded onto the metal. **[A/N: Imagine Link's hammer from Zelda only with a longer more detailed handle.]**

"I'll take it! How much?" The man asked.

"Hmm..." Naruto thought about it. "Tell you what, 25% extra from the payment of the original job, throw in the sword that's useless to you and it's yours."

"Deal!" The man said quickly shaking Naruto's hand and picking up his new weapon of choice easily.

The man left happy with a weapon better suiting him and Naruto was happy the sack of money and perfectly good sword left on the counter by the register.

"Alright Naruto, you're done for today." Daisuke said. "You go test your bola launcher for hunting while I close up shop and bring the staff to the Hokage's office for delivery."

Giving a nod, Naruto packed up his tools, sealed the sword away into a scroll, then sealed his money into the storage he dubbed his "earnings scroll", and went to the shed to seal the bola launcher into one of his smaller storage scrolls before heading out. Thinking it might be best to hunt near the outskirts of the village but still outside the village, he started walking towards the Hokage Monument. As he walked, he took out one of the sealing journals his mother wrote to read. The books on seals the Hokage said were Naruto's birthright weren't just manuals on seals but also a few dozen and more journals on seals personally created by members of the Uzumaki clan, journals written by his mother, grandfather, who was the last leader of Uzushiogakure before the village was destroyed, a great uncle, and more Uzumaki's that had died long before Naruto could meet them. One of the journals written by a great uncle contained the image and info on several different types of weight and gravity seals. He'd read that journal a couple days after he started going to the academy and started using those seals about a week later.

This particular journal, written by his mother, had the seal for Chakra Chains. His mother created chakra chains in a way that even if a Seal Master painted or drew the seals, they still wouldn't be able to use chakra chains because chakra chains will only work for those of Uzumaki blood, like a bloodline.

It was brilliant.

Reading everything there was to know about his mother's chakra chains and then re-reading it, Naruto didn't have that hard a time ignoring the sneers and scowls he was getting from several villagers just for walking by. He was too used to it to care and, as mentioned, he hadn't cared what they thought or how they saw him for a long time. All that mattered was how he saw himself and he liked himself.

Case closed.

Both feeling and hearing his stomach beginning to rumble having skipped lunch through work, even with all the times Daisuke tried to make him take a break to eat, he figured it was a good thing he was going hunting anyway. But he stopped by his house to get his fishing net anyway because whether or not he caught something filling, and he was sure he would, he'd probably still be hungry.

He put his book away as he made his way up into the mountains of the Hokage Monument, focusing his chakra to his hands and feet for the climb. Soon he made it far enough into the forest covered part of the mountains to go hunting without there being any chance of him running into another human being. Wandering a little further in where the trees thickened and there were bushes for cover, Naruto unsealed his bola launcher and quietly started rolling it along. Finding a good enough place to hide for hunting, he unfolds the launcher and scans the area for something good he could catch. It wasn't long until he found a couple of large boars snacking on some wild cabbage several yards in front of him.

"Alright, two for one." Naruto said to himself quietly with a smile as he took aim.

Just when he was about to pull the trigger, some big black blur flew in at his targets.

"What the-!"

Naruto jolted in surprise and accidentally pulled the trigger of his bola launcher, aim only slightly thrown off. The long roped six weight bola flew and hit whatever tried to catch the same boars he was trying to catch. Try being the key word seeing as the same two boars ran for the hills squealing. Naruto sighed at the loss before raising an eyebrow in the direction he heard the roaring and hiss-like screeches he'd heard when whatever he'd actually caught was hit with the bola. He could also hear the heavy sound of struggling and wood breaking, the creature was trying to free itself from the bola and, by the sound of it, it wasn't succeeding.

Naruto left his bola launcher behind and followed the noises along with a trail of yanked up bushes and some broken trees. Blinking and raising an eyebrow confusedly, Naruto continued on his trek through the forest and when he found what he was looking for...

He wouldn't have believed it if he hadn't seen it himself.

There, thrashing around in it's struggle to free itself from the long-roped bola was an ebony and onyx with a dark bluish tint scaled, bat-like winged with two other lower wings, long tailed, short spiked spine, four legged, five taloned, yellow green grass eyed, with what looked to be four- no six- no eight ears, honest-to-god...
*dragon*.

Naruto let out a surprised huff, mouth open, and eyes wide.

The dragon stilled it's thrashing before turning it's eyes on the blonde before taking a few deep breaths and slouching on it's side, staring Naruto in the eye, seeming to be waiting for the blonde to make the first move.

"A... A dragon_?" Naruto whispered to himself in disbelief. "But... But dragons are extinct! Or they're supposed to be..."

There were many tales about dragons, of both fact and falsified fictional stories for entertainment. But all the factual stories about dragons were decades, if not centuries, old.

Dragons were once real: FACT.

Dragons are now extinct: was once thought to be fact but now proven to be FALSE by one Naruto Uzumaki.

Said dragon started to hiss and growl, revealing all it's pointed pearly-white teeth, at the blonde when hearing the word "extinct".

"Hey, don't give me that." Naruto scolded with a frown. "You and I were hunting the same boars. Catching you was an accident. I wouldn't have caught you if you hadn't flown in right when I was about to pull the trigger. Now quit your grumbling so I can get you out and we can both be on our way."

Reluctantly, the dragon let out a huff of a sigh and let Naruto get on with helping it get loose.

"Oh man." Naruto sighed rubbing his face tiredly. "I go out hunting to practice with my bola launcher and end up accidentally catching a supposedly extinct creature... Somehow, this just typical."

The dragon let out it's own huff in agreement.

When Naruto pulled out a kunai though, the hissing started up again.

"Oh quit your complaining." Naruto said with a tired roll of his eyes. "I'm sure you want to be out of this as quick as possible and the quickest way would be to cut the ropes. You don't hurt me and I won't hurt you."

The dragon stopped hissing and raised it's own eyebrow in interest as Naruto began cutting away the ropes. As soon as enough rope was cut for it to get loose, the dragon leaped up and began to soar away... only to fall and crash off the cliff just a few feet

ahead.

Naruto blinked in surprise before sighing with his shoulders slouching forwards before following the dragon, and a trail of black scales, each almost half the size of his hand. Naruto couldn't resist picking up most of the fallen scales and sealing them away in a scroll to study later. The cliff turned out to be the edge of a canyon. A grassy canyon with boulders here and there, a small lake surrounded by walls of rock, and a waterfall. The dragon seemed to be trying and failing to fly up out of the canyon. Raising an eyebrow before taking out his blacksmith sketchbook and made a quick outline of the dragon from his higher viewpoint. Finding the dragon didn't have the left tail wing he'd drawn, he erased it before putting his sketchbook away and focused some chakra to his feet and walked down the rock wall into the canyon.

His stomach started rumbling when he was standing on the grass, alerting the dragon of his presence. The dragon curled into a crouch seeming be ready for anything, rolling his shoulders and looking very much like a cat doing so just before it pounces. Giving the dragon a glance but otherwise ignoring him, Naruto walked out to the water before walking on top of it, much to the dragon's surprise, before taking out his fishing net. Putting his fishing net in the water and grabbing onto the two different ends and holding the net behind him, he ran back and fourth across the water a few times before taking his small haul to land. There weren't many fish in this body of water and the size of the fish there weren't all that filling either, but it was better than nothing. Naruto figured he'd go hunting and fishing tomorrow and bring a bigger haul for the dragon then.

Seeing the dragon licking it's lips, Naruto picked up one of the larger fish by the gills and held it out for the dragon.

"Come on, I didn't get all this just for me." Naruto said.

Slowly making it's way over, the dragon was close enough and opened it's mouth to take the fish, revealing it's bare gums to Naruto.

Naruto raised an eyebrow in confusion. "Huh. Toothless... I could've sworn earlier you had-"

Just then, the top and bottom rows of big white pointed teeth came out of the dragons gums like a cat's extended claws and chomped on the fish and chewing it a couple of times before swallowing it whole.

"... teeth." Naruto finished. "Well eat up and I'll bring some bigger catches tomorrow." Naruto said putting his net away and gathered some wood within the valley to make a small fire to cook a couple fish he was going to eat.

When he knelt down to stack the wood for a fire, the dragon came over in front of him and spat up the fish Naruto had handed him... without it's head... right on Naruto's lap before sitting back and up straight, looking a bit like a kangaroo... A big kangaroo with a longer tail... and scales... and wings.

Naruto looked down at the headless fish, up at the dragon, then back down at the headless fish before slowly picking up the headless fish

and barely held back a "blech!" in disgust at the clear regurgitated slime coating it. He looked back up at the dragon and raised an eyebrow in question until it looked down at the fish then back at the blonde.

'_So I gave it food... and now it wants to return the favor...
Great._' Naruto thought with a sigh as he braced himself, closed his eyes, and took a bite but didn't swallow, fully intending to spit it out as soon as the dragon wasn't looking. "Mmmmm..." Naruto said holding up the fish, trying to look convincing.

Apparently the dragon wasn't satisfied until Naruto swallowed the bite he'd taken, hence the dragon motioning and imitating him doing so. Shoulders falling in disbelief and after giving a half-roll of his eyes, Naruto squeezed his eyes shut and swallowed. By some miracle able to hold back his gag reflex but unable to hold back the shudder that went up his spine before shaking it off and doing his best to grin at the dragon and bear it. When it looked like the dragon was trying to give it's own toothless smile, Naruto slowly stood with a hand reached out to try and pet the dragon. Seeing this, the dragon hissed before turning, leaping, and soaring a few yards away to a small hill and burning the ground in a circling motion with it's blue-white lightning looking breath to make itself a bed before curling up like a cat.

As Naruto made his way over and sat down, he noticed the dragon lifting it's head, looking closely at a mother bird looking after the eggs in her nest before flying away. Watching the bird fly away and turning it's head to follow the bird with it's eyes, it noticed that Naruto had come over and sat down a couple feet away. Looking at Naruto through half-lidded eyes for a moment before turning it's head away letting it's perked up ears fall in slight irritation, putting it's chin to the ground, and moving it's body so it could hide it's face from Naruto with it's tail. Curious, Naruto scooted over to get a closer look at the tail, close to touching it, when the dragon lifted the tail eyeing him as he stood and slowly but awkwardly walked away in a fluid motion. The dragon got up and walked away for another spot to nap.

A couple hours later with the sun starting to set, the dragon woke from where it hung upside down like a bat on one of the larger thicker roots protruding from the canyon walls, it's tail over the root and hanging in front of it's face. It's eyes looked around then passed it's tail to find Naruto still there, sitting on a boulder a few yards away, hunched over. Curious, the dragon hopped down and trotted over to see what the blonde was doing. There it found Naruto with a stick in hand, drawing in the dirt.

Naruto noticed but didn't stop drawing the shape of the dragon's head, eyes, and wings, said dragon following his movements with it's eyes and head it stop watching and walked off the the side on it's hind legs. Naruto watched the dragon break the branch off one of the few trees actually in the canyon rather then above them and brought it over before planting the broken part of the branch in the dirt and moving it's entire body to draw. It almost looked like it was dancing as it drew. Naruto had to duck slightly so he wouldn't get hit in the head by twigs and leaves when the dragon had circled a third time before dragging the line, circling again, and dropping the branch after dragging it through the dirt a little further.

Naruto stood looking at the "art", that had no real shape, completely surrounding him and tried to walk out of it. The dragon's eyes slit as it growled and Naruto found he'd stepped on one of the lines. He lifted his foot off the line getting normal dragon eyes and a purr in response.

Step on the line again.

Groowwl.

Step off the line again.

Purrrr.

Step on the line.

Growl.

Step off the line.

Purr.

Step over the line.

Continues to purr.

Naruto gave the dragon a light smile before doing his own sort of awkward but funny dance stepping over the lines and before he new it, there was a warm breath ruffling the hair on the back of his head. Turning to find he was standing only about an arm-length's distance away, he tried once again to reach out and touch it's head like he had a couple hours previous. Getting a growl and small glare with some teeth showing, Naruto retracted his hand a bit, and the dragon stopped growling but kept it's eyes narrowed on him. Pausing in thought for a moment, Naruto took a deep breath, closed his eyes, and let out the breath as he stretched his arm out fully. He figured, sure, he might lose a hand but it'd be worth it.

'If it won't let me come to it, I'll have it come to me.' He mentally mused.

The dragon looked at the palm of the blonde's outstretched hand thoughtfully, eyes softening before slowly, slightly hesitantly, bowed it's head a bit and easing it's muzzle against Naruto's palm with it's own eyes closed.

Feeling the smooth, cool, but warm touch of the dragon's skin, Naruto opened his eyes and watch in both disbelief and amazement. He didn't know exactly what the feeling he had through their contact, but he now felt a sort of... connection.... A bond with the dragon. The dragon's eyes opened as well, nose twitching and wiggling a bit as it moved away, and shook it's head with a bit of a scowl before leaping and soaring away from the blonde. It was just a glimpse, but Naruto had seen the look in it's eye. It- no, he...

He had felt the connection as well.

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2. Chapter 2

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Chapter Two

The sun had fully set and Naruto had found his forgotten bola launcher and sealed it back into a scroll before walking down the mountain's path and climbing back down into the village. He couldn't stop thinking about Toothless, as he had mentally started calling the dragon without realizing it until it was too late, and their connection. Not only the strange connection, but he couldn't stop thinking about the dragon's soaring and leaping patterns. There was something off about it. He felt there was something he was missing, something obvious. He was currently looking over the outline sketch he'd drawn of Toothless's body shape, whatever the problem was, it was staring him right in the face yet he still couldn't see it.

He'd been so lost in thought, he hadn't noticed he'd walked in the direction of the workshop rather than to his apartment. Maybe some metal working would clear his head a bit. Keeping his sketchbook open in hand, he knocked on the door of the weapons shop. Daisuke usually closed the weapons shop late at night, the workshop was always open. The reason he usually had Naruto stop working sometime in the afternoon was because when smithing, Naruto was all work, no play, and "play" seemed to include breaktime and lunch.

Daisuke motioned for Naruto to come in as he finished his business with a boy buying some stronger metaled kunai and ninja wire. A Hyuuga by the look of him. At first, Naruto almost thought he was a genin, but seeing no headband on his person, the Hyuuga boy was must have been still taking classes in the academy. It had to be his last year or second to last year attending though, seeing as he looked a little older than Naruto. Once inside the weapons shop, Naruto seemed to go back into a thoughtful state, staring at the outline sketch once more.

"New project?" Daisuke asked noting Naruto staring at pages in his blacksmith sketchbook.

Naruto jumped slightly, being brought out of his thoughts. "Uh... yeah! Sort of this new idea I have with... flying. You know, like paper airplanes or kites without the string to keep it grounded or a breeze to keep it up and using chakra to keep it flying around like a bird, so no one would think it's a ninja tool. I sort of got the idea from what I read about Suna's puppet techniques. I know that sounds impossible but impossible seems to be my forte." Naruto said in a quickly thought up cover-up. '_That doesn't sound like an all-too-bad idea actually- NO! I can think on it later!_'

Taking the sketchbook and getting a closer look at the sketch himself before handing it back to Naruto, Daisuke said, "Sounds clever and like it would take a lot of work. But you should probably redraw that tail wing you erased because if you tried flying it like that, it

would only get a couple feet off the ground before falling and crashing."

That was when it hit Naruto so hard he felt like smacking himself just to see if it had gotten through and again for not realizing it sooner. '_OF COURSE!_'

"I'm gonna head home for the night." Daisuke said stretching his arms over his head and cracking his back. "We don't have any orders to work on tonight. Close up the workshop when you're done alright?"

"Sure Daisuke."

Naruto put on his apron and got to work as soon as Daisuke had left. He melted down iron into thin, about arm-length and longer bars to in the place of dragon bone with the notches for opening and closing the wing. In place of dragon skin was chakra strengthened leather, thin enough to fly, but strong enough to carry half a ton without tearing. Having slipped the leather over the tail wing bone shaped iron, Naruto opened and closed the wing easily several times. Though he knew the real test would come the next day, when he put it on the dragon. Pushing away the several sketches he'd made of just the tail, Naruto got to working on the belt for the wing to actually stay on the dragon.

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The next morning, after his morning routine, Naruto was on his way out to the river for some training when Iruka found him and dragged him to the academy. The blonde didn't have to worry about Daisuke wondering where he was, the old blacksmith knew when he wasn't at work he must be at the academy. Otherwise the blonde would've told him he wouldn't be in the shop ahead of time and that didn't really happen often.

Today was a test day on Konoha's History, to name the countries Konoha is allied with and why, and, as a bonus, the students had to write an essay on what they learned outside the academy that would be useful to ninjas. Iruka was testing them, Mizuki was out sick, and the other co-instructors Iruka was usually paired with were either on a mission or already teaching another class. So, today, it seems Naruto doesn't have to worry about an unfair grade.

Not that he really cared anyway. While he was determined to become Rookie of the Year when he graduates, Naruto new academy grades meant absolutely nothing when risking your life going on real missions as a full-fledged ninja.

Naruto wrote a three part essay on chakra control, seals, and metal working. He'd explained in the first part about how his far above average chakra reserves made it difficult to even achieve the simplest of jutsu's and how sometimes he combined two different advanced chakra controlling techniques for some of his self-training. Like water walking and advanced kunai balancing. For the second part of the essay, he wrote about a simple storage scroll and how it could

be modified so that it could carry four to five times more than what it's originally meant to carry. Naruto even drew the modified seal on the essay and sealed five paper shurikans when the original seal, due to the seal being the size of a ten yen coin, would only hold one. Of course he had focused chakra into his pencil drawing it so it could work because he wasn't about to waste perfectly good sealing ink on a stupid test. For the last part of his essay, Naruto wrote how it was good to know your metals with weapons so you're not caught off guard when the blade of a ninja fighting with a bronze sword is cut in half by the blade of a ninja with an iron sword even when focusing chakra into the blades.

After passing in his test and essay, Naruto was told to go back to his seat and that he could do whatever he wanted for the rest of class time so long as he was quiet for the other students to finish their work. Naruto shrugged and went back to his seat opening his mother's journal on seals to read more about the chakra chains.

Naruto found that all he'd have to do is paint the seals on the palms of his hands and pads of his feet and once he focused chakra into them, that was it and that even if the seals were washed off afterwards, the chakra chain ability was permanent. Reading more, he also found that as long as it was on a solid surface, wherever his palms and feet touched after focusing his chakra, he could will the chains to shoot from. So the only real weakness the chakra chains had was that even though he could walk on water, he wouldn't be able to will the chains from the water or out of thin air. If need be, in that kind of situation, he'd have to improvise.

Iruka was surprised when grading Naruto's paper. All the answers were right and the essay he'd written was very informative. Naruto couldn't have cheated because none of his students knew any chakra control exercises other than leaf balancing and advanced leaf balancing and, supposedly, none had successfully executed either exercise yet. The jounin teachers they would get after graduation would be teaching them the other ways of chakra control. The seal the blonde had drawn with a pencil instead of sealing ink actually worked and Iruka wasn't exactly sure how the blonde knew what he did about metals. All that... and Naruto was one of the first few to pass in his test.

After everyone had passed in their tests and essays, for those that even bothered to write an essay which were six out of the forty-eight students he had, including Naruto, Iruka decided to take a review of what the students knew, mainly Naruto out of curiosity, that wasn't on the test.

"Who can tell me what became of the Senju Clan?" Iruka asked the class. "We all know about the Uchiha Clan, since Sasuke is right here, but where are the Senjus? Anyone?" Seeing his students from from one to another with a shrug or shake of the head, he looked over to Naruto, who was looking at Iruka with interest now rather than looking out the window in boredom like usual. "...Naruto, what about you?"

Naruto stood as most of the class snickered, thinking he was being picked on, Shikamaru and Choji were the only ones looking at the blonde with interest.

"The last living member of the Senju Clan is Lady Tsunade Senju." Naruto answered, gaining silence of the classroom and smiles from his two friends.

"Very good and what can you tell me about her?" Iruka asked curiously.

"She's one of the Sannin, having gained that title from Hanzo the Salamander of Amegakure with her two teammates during the Second Shinobi World War." Naruto answered. "She's a legend in her own right not simply because she's a Senju but with her achievements for being the most skilled medic-nin in Shinobi History and for literally being the physically strongest ninja in history as well. Not the strongest woman, but the strongest shinobi. She and her teammates were also the students of old man Sandaime."

"Very good." Iruka said with a proud smile.

Naruto ignored the surprised, shocked, and disbelieving stares he was getting from all but three of his classmates as he sat down. Shikamaru and Choji were smiling knowingly and Sasuke Uchiha had an eyebrow raised towards the blonde.

It was lunch time now and just when Naruto was about to leave with Shikamaru and Choji, Iruka called him back to talk.

"Let me guess." Naruto said to the chÅ«nin once they were alone. "You graded my test, realized I hadn't cheated at least on my essay and with my answer about Tsunade Senju during class, you realized I hadn't cheated on the test either, so now your wondering why my grades tanked before."

Blinking in surprise, Iruka nodded.

"Let me ask you this then. When was the last time you were the one grading my papers or at least the pile of papers with my paper in it seeing as you and Mizuki, or whoever you're working with at the time, split the work? Or when was the last time you actually saw me doing the physical classwork outside with the rest of the class when I wasn't sent back to the classroom because apparently Naruto was causing trouble?" Naruto asked mimicking the voice of the other chÅ«nins Iruka was paired up with for teaching when he wasn't on a mission.

Iruka blinked again thoughtfully and actually couldn't remember a time where he was personally grading Naruto's papers or Naruto's participation in practice and physical lessons with the class when he wasn't skipping.

"I don't tank my grades because I want to, my grades are tanked whenever you're not the one grading them." Naruto said honestly.

"Ever since I started coming to the academy when I was eight, you are the only teacher in this academy to grade me fairly. When the other teachers saw that, they started making me out to be the troublemaker wanting attention I haven't even cared about getting since I was six and half. They would fail my papers without even looking at the answers and when it came to physical work, like taijutsu, the teachers would try to convince me the wrong way for everyone else was the right way for me. I already knew the academy's basic taijutsu, and when I refused to listen to their fake improvements to

my stances and such, they'd kick me out of class for _causing trouble_. I skip class all the time because _outside_ class is where I actually seem to learn something. Another reason is for my working hobby I get paid for."

"Huh?" Iruka questioned with an eyebrow raised.

"Iruka-sensei, I've been an apprentice blacksmith to Daisuke Yakedo for three and a half years now." Naruto said tiredly, much to Iruka's surprise. "I've _made_ a little over half of the weapons this academy has been ordering from the weapons shop since becoming a blacksmith. Heck, the first set of kunai and shurikan this academy provided for me was my own work! I've been under Daisuke's tutelage, and that of a few ANBU, since becoming his apprentice and learned more in one day with them than I had in my first two weeks here at the academy, if not longer. I know more than what the teachers, aside from you, could or would be willing to teach me. That's why I'm skipping all the time. I'd rather be doing something I love and getting paid for it than coming here only to get kicked out of lessons I already know. I'd already tried talking to old man Hokage about it but the civilian half of the Konoha Council is in charge of the academy and, while they are not in charge of the students that go here, they _are_ in charge of hiring and firing the teachers in charge here. And they're not about to let the _village scapegoat_ _quit_ the academy for self-study. I've tried that already."

With that Naruto left for lunch with Shikamaru and Choji, leaving Iruka in thought for a moment before the chÅ«nin hurried to the Hokage's office.

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"So what was that about Naruto?" Choji asked munching on a rice ball.

"Iruka thought about my past schooling logically after finally grading one of my papers for himself after the two and a half years we've been going here." Naruto answered taking a bite of his own rice ball.

"About time, troublesome teachers." Shikamaru said before yawning.

"Tell me about it." Naruto said with a nod.

Naruto and Shikamaru have been friends since sometime in the second week they started at the academy. Naruto, Shikamaru, and Choji all became friends about about three or four days after that.

Naruto and Shikamaru's friendship started when they both fell asleep during class and had to spend detention together. Being bored in detention and unable to fall asleep again, Shikamaru asked Naruto if he wanted to play shogi. Feeling as bored as the brunette and having contemplating skipping the detention all together, Naruto agreed. As they played, the two of them sitting atop a desk facing each other, they got to talking.

Shikamaru told about the plan he had for his life all the way to

retirement and dying of old age unless something happens in the future to change something in his plans. Naruto said he had a good plan but told him he should think of other outcomes seeing as no one can know what life will throw at them at any and every given time. Shikamaru, having thought about it after a moment, agreed. Naruto then explained his plans on skipping a lot of academy classes to work at the workshop with Daisuke and how the academy teachers seemed to give him failing grades no matter how detailed Naruto got with his essays or answers. He then got to telling Shikamaru that while he planned on being a great ninja, he was first and foremost a blacksmith. Shikamaru then asked if he could join Naruto skipping class.

Naruto just shrugged and said, "Sure, I won't stop you."

And their friendship began.

A few days later, Naruto and Shikamaru met up halfway walking to the academy, got to talking, and decided to skip class later just when they reached the academy yard. Walking through the gate, they heard some kids getting together to "play ninja" but they started ragging and ranting when Choji asked if he could join. Shikamaru stood up for him listing off a few of the Akimichi's achievements and how numbers in ninja were better rather than who was strongest. Naruto agreed and said that "playing ninja" out on the battlefield would just get you killed and then asked what the kids could do that made them think they were Choji's betters. One of the more snotty and superior-attitude kids asked why they should listen to the two class dobes.

Naruto countered with, "Can you actually do the leaf balancing exercise?" before picking up a leaf, putting it on his forehead, and making it hover a foot and a half above his head. "This is what's learned this year and mastered by the end of next year. Since the class dobes can do this exercise while you can't, do you really think our status in the academy is all it's cracked up to be?"

That shut up all the kids quick and Shikamaru and Naruto decided to skip class all together when the bell rang. Choji asked where they were going when he saw them headed back for the gate while everyone else was headed inside. The blonde and brunette said they could learn more outside the academy and didn't want to go in for a lesson they both probably already knew. Nervously, Choji asked if he could go with them, his head down thinking they'd probably say 'no'.

Looking to each other, Naruto and Shikamaru simultaneously shrugged and said, "Sure, why not?"

They'd spent that day at the workshop, Naruto fixing weapons in his zone while Shikamaru and Choji practiced in the yard with some shurikan and kunai Naruto himself made with steel a few days previous.

"Think we should just skip class after this." Shikamaru asked the blonde, bringing him out of his reminiscing.

"Nah. Let's wait and see. Maybe something interesting will happen." Naruto said getting a nod of agreement from the two.

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"Lord Hokage, it's ridiculous." Iruka said standing in front of the Hokage's desk. "I mean, I just thought Naruto was hiding his potential, not that my fellow teachers were trying to force it down. Just from what I saw today, he's future Rookie of the Year material under the forced guise of Dead Last, and, while I still have some doubts, he might've graduated by now if I wasn't the only teacher taking ninja lessons seriously. And I'm ashamed to have not even noticed it myself."

Lord Hokage stroked his beard having listened to Iruka's arguments for the past ten to fifteen minutes before giving a slight sigh. "While Naruto is right about me being unable to do anything about the actual scholastics in the academy, there is something I could do that I should have thought of earlier. Iruka, when you go back to the academy, dismiss your class for the day. I will be sending my ANBU to the other teachers to dismiss the rest of the classes and bring all the teachers here to talk. You are welcome to join them."

"Yes Lord Hokage." Iruka said with a bow.

"Good. You're dismissed."

Iruka gave another bow before leaving the office and heading back to the academy.

Once he was gone Lord Hokage sighed tiredly. "Dog, Cat, Lizard, Snake."

Having called their code names, the four ANBU appeared kneeling to the old man.

"Yes, Lord Hokage." Two male and two female voices said from behind their porcelain masks.

"Go to the academy and tell the teachers that when break is over, to dismiss their classes and come straight here." The Sandaime said firmly.

"Yes, Lord Hokage." They said before disappearing.

Sighing to himself once more, the old muttered, "I should've done this ages ago."

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"Class will be ending early today due to a last minute meeting the teachers have with Lord Hokage. Dismissed." Iruka announced as soon as everyone was present when lunch break ended.

"Look's like there was nothing to skip anyway." Shikamaru said boredly as they stood to leave.

"That's nothing new." Naruto said flatly making his friends snicker.

"Yeah, for you.." Choji said. "You forget Naruto, you're a few years ahead of us."

"In chakra control and basic taijutsu. Not so much in anything else and things like science, math, and history don't count because those are also taught in the civilian school on the other side of the village and I needed to know those three things amongst others as a blacksmith. Well, not so much the history. I just find history interesting." Naruto said as they walked down the hall with the other students.

"What about kenjutsu?" Choji asked.

"What's the point of making weapons that I don't know how to use?" Naruto countered. "Beside's, they don't teach anything more than the basics of becoming genin at the academy. All they teach in weaponry is kunai and shurikan throwing and the basic uses of ninja wire for basic traps."

"What about seals?" Shikamaru asked.

"Now that's different." Naruto said. "One of the goals I have is to become a Seal Master. Compared to what I'm learning to do with seals, even the more skilled shinobi in the village know only the basics taught in the academy, if not a little more than that. To be a seal master, I have to know several different dozen things in many different professions. That's kind of where I also learned about Tsunade Senju when I was reading up on the physical body for the seals that have to do with such. There's a seal for nearly everything out there and to become a seal master, I have to learn all of that and more. Or at least about them. Seals are like swords and the different types of seals are like sword fighting styles. You don't have to learn all the different sword fighting styles to be a master. You can, but you don't have to."

"And you're learning everything you can to master." Shikamaru concluded.

"Right." Naruto said with a nod as they walked out the gate. "And so far for me with seals, it's only come to around three types and a little of a fourth and fifth I've focused on learning to master. Containment seals, which are most commonly used by just about everyone to an extent, medical seals, physical seals, security seals, and summoning seals. I'm more focused on the first three for now."

"What's the difference between physical seals and medical seals?" Choji asked. "Don't they kinda fall under the same class?"

"Physical seals have to do with improving your body or seals that you put on your body for some things other than improving. Medical seals are for healing but could also cause health damage, and a lot of it, on an opponent." Naruto explained. "Gravity and weight seals, for example, are physical seals. They both help you get physically stronger and faster but in different ways. A chakra suppression seal, however, is a medical seal. While it can be used for physical training and improving your chakra reserves, it can do a lot more damage than improvement if used wrong. Like those military ration pills your family makes. They're not meant to be a replacement for food and taking more than you need to at that time you may need them

most could kill you rather than help you."

After taking a short walking distance down the road from the academy gate, someone shoved between them and harshly bumped shoulders with Naruto. It was a girl with her hair in two buns wearing a form fitting lilac t-shirt, bandaged knuckles, a dark blue yellow-trimmed short-sleeved Chinese vest, and matching long shorts. Her brown eyes were glaring at Naruto, straight in the eye, as she shoved through before turning her nose up and trotting forwards.

"What's her problem? Troublesome girl." Shikamaru muttered. "You know her, Naruto?"

"Yeah..." Naruto said rubbing his shoulder with a slight wince.

"She looks a year ahead of us." Choji noted. "How do you know her?"

"That's Tenten. She's Daisuke's granddaughter."

"Ah." The two said in understanding.

"She's kinda bitter towards me... or bitter towards herself because of me." Naruto said with a tired sigh.

"Why?" His two friends ask in unison.

"I... may have... kinda... accidentally... beat her in a spar... twice." Naruto said awkwardly.

"Oh, so she's bitter that she lost to the supposed class dobe a year under her." Shikamaru mused nodding.

"Well, yeah, there's that... and more." Naruto said slouching his shoulders forward tiredly.

"So what happened?" Choji asked failing to hold back a smile.

Naruto sighed. "Well, the first spar wasn't challenged, it kinda just... happened. I wouldn't even call it a spar, not really. This was only about a month or so ago. I'd skipped class again to work and, like today, class got out early. I heard a fire started."

"Oh yeah." Choji said remembering. "I don't really know what happened, but one of the teachers tried to pin it on you until Iruka nearly tore their head off saying you'd skipped class again and that if they want to blame someone, blame someone who actually showed up and to have proof."

"Figures. Anyway, I was melting down the metal for an order when Tenten walked in, thinking I was probably Daisuke. While I was working and still in my zone, I hadn't even noticed she'd walked in until I caught a kunai she threw at me and threw it right back at her on reflex. I continued working, ignoring her as she started shouting how I shouldn't be there and how it was her grandfather's shop and kept going on and on about it. I finally started getting annoyed as I was finishing up and flat out told her to shut up and let me do my job. She'd seen me in the weapons shop from time to time but I don't think she ever thought I was Daisuke's apprentice. That much was confirmed when Daisuke finally comes in to see what she was shouting

about and she started pointing fingers at me. Daisuke explained how I was his apprentice and how I have been for over three years now and that I was also a schoolmate of hers at the ninja academy. When she asked him why I wasn't there that day, I said I could speak for myself and that I'd rather do something more worthwhile with my time.

"That started another one-sided argument that I didn't really listen to at all, so I don't remember much of what she'd said except that being a ninja was an honor, that she was going to be a weapons mistress, and that I should take my schooling more seriously. I told her that while I liked being a great ninja, I was first and foremost a blacksmith and that I liked it that way even if everyone one else thought I was a dobe. She then smirked like anyone with a superiority complex, *_cough cough_*Sasuke*_cough_*, " he got a laugh out of Choji and Shikamaru with that, "and said that everything made sense now. I chose to be a blacksmith because I couldn't be a ninja. I shot that back at her when I said that Daisuke was a blacksmith because most of the council were made up of idiots, that I chose to be a blacksmith before even starting at the academy, and that she would've known that if she'd paid attention to Daisuke's explanation of my being there earlier. When she looked at me to explain, I started being a smartass and said slowly that I had been Daisuke's apprentice for over _three_ years while I'd only been at the academy for _two_ and that I learned more with him than I did in a classroom like her even though she was a year older than me and _supposedly_ more skilled.

"Tenten's anger got the best of her and she threw several shurikan and kunai at me while I just blocked and caught them all before putting them in the oven to melt, she started screeching at me until I told her that if she wasn't going to use perfectly good weapons that _I_ made properly, I would melt them down and turn them into something more useful. She tried to argue that I couldn't make something like that when Daisuke pointed out that a blacksmith knows their own work when they see it. I proved it further telling her that any weapon with a spiral engraved, embedded, or molded into it was made by me. She took out one of her kunai and Daisuke pointed out the small spiral engraved just above the handle on the bottom right side of the blade. No matter how small it may be, the symbol of Whirlpool is my signature."

Shikamaru and Choji blinked a moment of surprise before taking out one of their own kunais. After a closer look, they saw the spiral in the same place as Naruto had said was on Tenten's kunai. The symbol was one-fourth the size of a 10 yen coin, but it was there. They smiled shaking their heads in proud disbelief, putting their kunai away as Naruto continued.

"Tenten then started going through all her ninja tools and weaponry and found that the _only_ thing she had that I hadn't made was this Chinese dagger she got when she was four. Even her favorite naginata was something I'd made. I told her if she wanted to be a weapons mistress then she should take her weapons more seriously and pay attention to even the smallest of details. She stormed off and that was the end of that. Not much of a spar but enough for her to think of it as one. A couple days later, I'd skipped class again and when school got out, I was practicing with a tanto I finished working on about an hour previous. Tenten asked if I made the tanto or if it was a customer's. I told her no self respecting warrior, or honorable one, fights with someone else's weapon unless it's passed down to

them, bought themselves, or earned. She challenged me to a spar, my tanto vs her own tanto, which I had also made. I shrug and agree. Not ten minutes later, I win and her tanto is standing blade-first in the dirt. I go back to work, the end. There are quite a few reasons why she's bitter. She was beat by the supposed class dobe a year younger than her. Said dobe she doesn't think takes being a shinobi seriously, which in itself is ridiculous because anyone in the academy who doesn't take being a shinobi seriously will just get themselves killed on the field."

"Like Sasuke's fangirls." Shikamaru said getting a laugh from Choji and a agreeing smile from Naruto.

"Exactly like them." Naruto said a bit more seriously. "She also thinks I'm holding back in school when I'm not skipping. Or at least she did until I told her what the teachers have been like towards me since the beginning, so that's out. Tenten takes her being and becoming a weapons mistress very seriously as well as shinobi status. She's a bit bitter for having realized that for some, titles could be just that instead of something earned. Like the dobe status the three of us seem to have because of teachers who don't pay attention to detail and students who are even more so."

"Yeah. So you guys coming over to the restaurant for dinner tonight? I could go for another lunch right about now." Choji said rubbing his tummy.

Naruto and Shikamaru gave a light laugh and shake of the head.

"Sure, but I'm gonna challenge my dad to a shogi game for now. I'll meet you there." Shikamaru said.

"Can't. I kinda got plans." Naruto said. "Maybe tomorrow though."

"Okay, see you guys later."

"Bye." Shikamaru said with a yawn.

"Later Choji."

And the three parted ways.

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Meanwhile the Sandaime stood at his desk looking among his chÅ«nin in charge at the academy with much disappointment. For such supposedly grown men and women to stoop to such low and childish actions...

He could only shake his head and sigh.

"There is something that all of you have been doing in the academy and I let it go on thinking maybe things would change and you would see for yourselves that what you're doing is wrong. I was wrong to think so. Your actions have been disgraceful!" The Hokage said to the chÅ«nin teachers who could only look at one another in question. Iruka was looking at the ground in guilt for not seeing it sooner.

"You are all chÅ«nin. You earned your place as chÅ«nin and are hired to teach the next few generations and instead you teach while showing favoritism and heavy prejudice towards students. Two more popular cases being Sasuke Uchiha and Naruto Uzumaki."

Several chÅ«nin started shouting in argument at the same time.

"SILENCE!" The Sandaime ordered with a heavy killing intent swarming the room, making the protests come to an abrupt end. "Towards Sasuke Uchiha I have found that several of you don't bother correcting him where he's wrong and overly praising him over the littlest of things and by doing so, you are hindering his learning and increasing the possibilities of him getting killed for stupid and arrogant actions he may make on the field on his first higher ranked missions. Such actions can only be holding you responsible if his jounin teacher will be unable to fix it. If this continues, then by the time Mr. Uchiha graduates from the academy, he will think everything he does is right even if it jeopardizes a treaty we have causes the next war!"

The teachers paled white at the thought of both the Uchiha getting killed because of them or him causing the next war because of their favored teachings. War could start over the slightest of insults after all.

"And then there's the situation with Naruto. It's not only disgraceful, it's ridiculous! You fail him without even looking at his answers on paper and whenever he shows initiative you kick him out of class! I know you think that by hindering Naruto's teaching, you're hindering any damage the nine-tailed fox will have on the village as it regrows, but let me make something perfectly clear... Naruto. Is. NOT. The. Kyuubi! If he was, I assure you, he would've destroyed the village ages ago for the ignorance and vindictive childishness the civilians and you have shown towards him. The Fourth Hokage did not choose Naruto for sealing Kyuubi to be a scapegoat, he wanted the boy to be seen as a hero for keeping it a bay without even knowing it. That was his dying wish and I can bet he's turning in his grave with each passing day he sees the village not only ignoring that request but dragging it through the mud. When you do anything hindering Naruto, you are not hindering the kyubi of anything, you're hindering an innocent young adolescent with the potential to be the greatest shinobi to walk in the Leaf Village.

"When you seal a kunai into a storage scroll and cut the storage scroll in half, the kunai is released and unharmed. Kyuubi's the kunai, Naruto's the scroll. The Fourth Hokage designed and created the seal holding the kyubi within Naruto to protect the village yes, but it was mostly to protect Naruto himself should anything happen to him within the village or out. If Naruto is fatally injured, the kyubi is released and the only one who would be able to defeat it is Naruto because of that seal, because the Fourth chose him! Would you expect someone scorned by their own village their entire life to protect it from the very thing his village feared the most? Most likely not. But Naruto would. He is far more honorable than most people, much less those who are ninja, and all of you apparently combined. Forcing him under the guise of Class Dobe... Can any one of you say for sure that anything you were supposedly teaching the academy students was actually learned?

"In all my life, with all I've seen, have I never stood in front of the most disgraceful acting shinobi... If it is to continue, consider all of you hereby suspended from the ranks until further notice and the academy closed until I actually have teachers working there. Dismissed, drop your chÅ«nin vests on my desk before you leave."

Slowly, two by three, the teaching chÅ«nin unzipped their vests and piled them on the Hokage's desk, all showing faces of fear, remorse, regret, guilt in nearly every way as they bowed and left. The only one who didn't have a look of anything but rage, holding in the urge to shout and scream in protest as he left, was Mizuki.

The last one out was Iruka who gave a nod and smile of thanks as he handed his vest over, the Sandaime returning the action, before he too left. Sighing, the old man sealed the vests into a scroll and putting it into one of his desk drawers before getting back to filling out his paperwork.

Ugh. Paperwork.

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Naruto was carrying a very large straw basket on his back full of cod, carp, salmon, and a couple of wild turkeys he'd hunted. He'd plucked and roasted them over a fire as he went fishing and ate a leg on the way up into the mountains when he was done fishing. He knew the dragon seemed really cat-like and loved fish like one, but was still rather curious about a dragon's diet. In a storage scroll in the pocket of his hoodie was the replacement tail wing he'd built.

"Hey Toothless." The blonde greeted the dragon lying around looking bored. "Sorry I didn't come earlier but I got you lunch and breakfast. Hope you're hungry." Naruto said taking the basket from his back and dumping the haul in front of the dragon. "Got you some cod, carp, salmon, and a couple plucked and roasted turkeys I got on the way to the river. I ate one of the legs, hope you don't mind."

Naruto chuckled watching Toothless dig right in before making his way over to Toothless's tail and kneeling down beside it. As Toothless continued to eat, Naruto tried to scoot the replacement tail wing close enough to put it on only for the tail to scoot further away. Naruto gave Toothless a half irritated half unimpressed look only to find the dragon didn't seem to be even paying attention to what Naruto was doing. To save time and trouble, Naruto straddles the tail only to have to grab on when Toothless suddenly pulls forward to get the last few fish still in the basket. Naruto sighs and shakes his head before lifting Toothless's tail just high enough to get the belt strap under it and buckling it on, ignoring the light roll and flap Toothless did with the tail wing he still had and the sort of croak sound Toothless made behind him. Naruto really should've paid more attention to his surroundings as he finished buckling the replacement tail wing, because then he would've noticed Toothless lifting and spreading his wings for flight. But he was too busy looking over the tail and thinking how it can work for a little while but may need a

few adjustments later.

Suddenly, he was in the air and had to grab hold of the tail, using his chakra instinctively to hold on just in case. Seeing they were about to crash, Naruto reaches up and holds the replacement tail and they went from half a foot above a crash landing to a vertical take off. They were flying high over the mountains and over the ocean on the other side.

"YES! It's working!" Naruto said to him with slight disbelief and glee.

This was the first time he'd done something like this after all.

He turned the tail and bit and Toothless turned soaring back to the valley. Naruto didn't know what it was, but flying felt like breathing for the first time. Bending the replacement tail wing again had Toothless soaring two to three just above the small lake in the valley.

"Alright! I did it!" Naruto shouted happily.

Toothless looks back and whips his tail, sending Naruto flying and flipping on the water like a skipping rock even though he'd been using chakra to help him hold on. Then Toothless found he couldn't fly anymore, seeing as Naruto had been holding the replacement tail wing open, and he too crashed into the water. Naruto, even though the dragon had thrown him off, couldn't help jumping in excitement having successfully building Toothless a working replacement tail wing.

Now he just needed a way to stay on and keep the tail wing open.

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He'd hunted and fished more food for Toothless so he could measure the dragon for a saddle before going back down to the village. He stopped by his house for an early and big dinner before going to the workshop.

Daisuke had gotten another order of shurikan and kunai for the older years of ninja academy, a set of hunting knives ordered by the Akimichi, an outside-village order requesting a katana be made from scratch with a list of what it is to be made with and other things requested of the blade, another outside village order for a first built battle fan with a sketch-drawn requested design from the Sand Village Kazekage himself, and a broken tanto that looked to have broken over a decade ago, give or take a few years, that the ANBU who owned it specifically requested Naruto be the one to fix it.

Daisuke and Naruto made the kunai and shurikan together before Naruto went to making the fan while Daisuke took to making the katana. All the requests made for the katana made it sound more like it was going to be a sparkling wall ornament rather than an extension of a warrior's self, so Naruto didn't want any part of it. Daisuke had finished the trophy-katana and went to making the hunting knives right then and there. He didn't like building trophy-weapons much either.

Naruto had just finished with the fan when Daisuke had finished up the hunting knives and told Naruto he was going to go back into the weapons shop seeing as the last smith-order for the day was specifically for Naruto.

When Naruto got to the tanto, he saw that while it had been broken years ago the pieces were well taken care of. He got to working immediately. It was sundown by the time he was finished and the tanto glowed with a white sheen as he sheathed it. He realized then, that the ANBU must've been Kakashi Hatake, son of Sakumo Hatake, and that the tanto he'd fixed was the White Light Chakra Sabre! Naruto didn't know which ANBU Kakashi Hatake was, but he knew the man must've known him well enough to know this would make his day.

Unless it was a test...

After dazedly handing the White Light Chakra Sabre over to Daisuke for pick-up tomorrow, Naruto shook his head and got to making the saddle. He knew the hardest thing about the saddle would most likely be actually getting it onto the dragon.

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3. Chapter 3

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Chapter Three

Naruto had been right.

The hardest part about the saddle was actually getting it on Toothless.

Though that isn't saying there weren't any difficulties afterwards. After about an hour of chasing Toothless around the canyon and convincing the dragon it was for the best, Naruto first tried using a leather cord attached to the tail while he held onto the cord to turn the tail wing and hold it open. Only to try it, send Toothless crashing, and Naruto himself flying off Toothless.

Apparently using chakra to help you hold on doesn't help much when it comes to dragons, for some odd reason. Naruto figured he probably should have remembered that from when he first took an accidental ride on Toothless's tail.

Naruto had gone back to the workshop during the night with the saddle and made a thick and wide waist belt with a cord on either side, each with a metal ring at the end to put on the hooks he'd put on the saddle so he wouldn't fall off next time. The morning after, Naruto hurried to the canyon, put the saddle back on Toothless, tied the cord attached to the tail wing to his ankle this time, and got to

flying. While there was still difficulty having to concentrate on the direction they were flying in and keeping one leg in the saddle while the other was used to try and fail to turn the tail accordingly, Naruto and Toothless were at least able to fly up and out of the canyon... Only to crash into a tall field of light and brightly colored yellowish green grass that Toothless seemed to love rolling around in. Naruto couldn't help watching with a raised eyebrow and a light smile. The grass was like catnip for dragons.

Dragon nip.

Naruto took a couple handfuls and sealed it away into a scroll to bring back home and study later. After about a half hour of letting Toothless roll around happily in the dragon nip, Naruto took him away from the field the plant flourished in and back to the canyon before the blonde went back to the village. He went straight home and got to studying the dragon nip. After burning one leaf, he found dragon nip can numb up three of the five physical senses; touch, taste, smell and it made you feel slightly disoriented, tired, and/or dizzy. He took another two leaves and crushed them into a near solvent lotion or ointment that numbs the skin and feeling of touch instantly. Naruto could only imagine what burning dragon nip and the ointment he'd made could do to a dragon with their much more advanced senses. But, then again, dragons love the stuff. Maybe the Inuzuka Clan...

Okay, he'd probably have some fun with Kiba.

Gathering up his things and tools, Naruto got ready to leave for work in the workshop. He was just about to leave for the workshop when he found Daisuke at his door.

"Oh, Naruto, I was just about to knock." Daisuke said.

"I was just about to leave for the workshop." Naruto said confusedly.
"What's up?"

"Well, for one thing, I'm here to deliver your earnings for this week, aside from the upfront payment from that customer you sold your battle hammer to." Daisuke said hanging over a sealed scroll. "For another, as my apprentice, you know there are some orders I am to give you where there are no questions asked, right?"

"Yeah..." Naruto said still confused.

"Good. This is an order from master to apprentice. I want you to take today and tomorrow off from shop work Naruto, for a break." Daisuke said. "I know you love working in the shop Naruto, but really, take this time off. You may need it. You can stop by if it's pleasure work but I will only let it be for one project, no more."

Wanting to argue but knowing he couldn't, Naruto sighed. "Okay. There are some things I should get to work on."

"Don't just work Naruto. Have some fun. That's the point." Daisuke said.

"I know." Naruto said with a shrug and nod okay before Daisuke left with a sigh.

"Oh!" Daisuke said turning his head to look at Naruto over his shoulder. "I also thought I should let you know, the Hokage closed down the academy until further notice and no one's really sure when it will open for classes again."

"Okay, thanks for letting me know, Daisuke."

"Goodbye Naruto."

So Naruto went back to the canyon to Toothless and figured he shouldn't be the only one with a break. Taking the saddle off, he started petting the uncovered scales on the black dragon's back. Petting turned to scratching and Toothless couldn't get enough of it. Naruto got to scratching around Toothless's neck and accidentally got a point just under the back of Toothless's jaw that made the dragon fall stomach to the ground, sleeping happily with his tongue hanging out.

Naruto could only blink in surprise before smiling and thinking of pressure points.

He knew he couldn't rely on academy taijutsu forever and while he'd developed a sort of unpredictable street-fighting taijutsu style, he couldn't really rely on that either since it was a movement or two short of brawling. He remembered finding a chapter or two on pressure points when he was reading up on medical seals. After hanging out with Toothless for another two hours, after waiting half an hour for the dragon to wake up on his own, Naruto went back to the village and snuck into the village library, checking medical books, medic-nin and civilian-medic alike, on muscles, tendons, and pressure points.

He went back home, taking Toothless's saddle and replacement tail wing with him. The green house he'd turned the roof into wasn't the only reconstruction he'd given the building. The whole apartment complex had five floors, excluding the basement and roof-turned-greenhouse. Each floor had four large one-room apartments. Half the one-room apartment being a bedroom/living room and the other half a kitchen/dining room, excluding the average sized bathroom. While still unsure what to do with the other four floors and other three apartments on the first, Naruto had turned one of the very large basement areas into his own woodworking/mechanics workshop and library. This was where he'd built the bola launcher. There were two basement levels and, before reconstructing, each level had ten rooms for storage provided for the people that were supposed to live in the apartments. Naruto tore down all the walls separating the empty underground storage rooms and while he had turned the upper basement level into his own private workshop/library, he turned the bottom level into his own private training room.

After having read a few books on puppets and puppet master ninja techniques from Sand Village soon after becoming Daisuke's apprentice, Naruto, while not so interested into the art of a puppet master, was very interested in the mechanics required for puppet making and chakra strings. Naruto got to sketching and building a practice dummy. A dummy with chakra points, pressure points, tendons, and more. He already had a few wooden practice dummies set up down in the training room, he just needed to mechanize and fix one up for his idea. Half a day of work later, the dummy was finished, but he knew he couldn't test it yet until he'd worked his street fighting form into a taijutsu aiming for pressure points. Spending six hours alone

working on his taijutsu form he decided to take a break to eat and stretch. While he tends to forget to do so when working with his mechanics and at Daisuke's workshop, he knew he'd need the energy for physical workouts and practice. He went back to practicing for another few hours before going to bed.

Waking up early, a couple hours before sunrise, Naruto went through his regular morning routine before sneaking into Daisuke's workshop. He hadn't forgotten how he still needed to make a few final tweaks on Toothless's tail wing. This time he mixed the metal working with mechanisms and made two large rings for Toothless's shoulders attached to the saddle, two flexible metal bars connected from the tail to the saddle, rings along the left bar for the leather cord controlling the action of the replacement tail wing to go through, connected to a foot peddle, and a leather strap connecting the two shoulder rings to each other across Toothless's chest.

Finally finished with the new adjustments for the tail wing and just barely escaping Daisuke's sight, but still sure Daisuke must've seen him, Naruto went back home. At home, Naruto did several more morning exercises before having breakfast, reading up on some seals and pressure points, and then went back to the reshaping and forming of his taijutsu style. He'd practiced until midday before taking a shower, having lunch, and went back to Toothless's canyon.

Toothless didn't give Naruto any trouble for putting on the saddle, tail wing, and shoulder rings... Of course, he was eating a very large haul of fish while Naruto put the newly adjusted tail wing and saddle on, but still. After waiting for Toothless to finish eating, Naruto took him out of the canyon and up to a grassy cliff with a broken tree trunk. The blonde tied a rope around the tree trunk and tied the other end to the leather strap connecting the shoulder rings of Toothless's saddle to each other across the dragon's chest. For the next few minutes as the wind picked up, he and Toothless hovered a couple feet off the ground with the wind blowing against Toothless's open wings so he could sketch and study the positions of the tail in flight. After just drawing the last position with Toothless's wings spread wide, an unexpectedly harsh wind blew and the rope holding them down snapped, sending the dragon and his trainer flying back and onto the ground. With a pained groan Naruto raised himself to his knees only to be pulled up by the waist belt when Toothless rolled over from his back to his stomach.

Naruto looks up to find that the left hook on the saddle was bent in, trapping the left ring on his waist belt cord.

"Oh great." Naruto groans. "And I left my tools at the workshop this morning. I usually bring my tools everywhere with me. Should've known to never make exceptions. So how am I going to get us to my tools, through a ninja village, without anyone seeing a supposedly extinct creature?" The blonde asked his dragon.

Said dragon just shrugs making Naruto sigh.

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The sun was already beginning to set, so Naruto and Toothless only needed to wait a couple hours after nightfall. While the workshop was

always open, Daisuke usually leaves for home about an hour after closing the weapons shop. Sneaking Toothless into the village from the mountains was actually pretty easy... Sneaking Toothless past the ANBU on night watch that Naruto just knew had to be watching them, however, he didn't want to think about.

He knew he couldn't keep Toothless a secret forever, but he wanted the dragon's assumed extinction to stay that way for as long as possible. After all, if Toothless wasn't extinct, what could that say about any other dragon thought to be gone?

Naruto got Toothless into the workshop and made his way over to his smithing area where he'd left his tools. Toothless stuck his head in a bucket, looking for food, throwing it off to the side a moment later after finding the bucket was empty. Shushing Toothless and hurrying over to his tools, Naruto grabbed a thin crowbar and wedged it between the leather of the saddle and the bent-in hook. Seeing as he made the hooks strong enough to hold his weight and more, he knew it would probably take some time using all his weight as leverage to unbend the hook. Putting all his weight on the other end of the thin crowbar didn't seem to be doing much good right now.

"Naruto?" Daisuke's voice rang out.

Naruto and Toothless stiffened.

Naruto was frozen in the air, legs folded behind him balancing his body on the end of a crowbar at his abdomen, said crowbar sort of making the blonde bounce in the air, attached to the saddle on his dragon. Said dragon had been frozen for a moment as well before it's pupils narrowed into slits, as if waiting for something until Naruto gave the silent command to hide. The light of Daisuke's lantern bounced off the ground behind the doors and through the cracks. Naruto and Toothless only stood frozen for another moment before rushing in fluid motion as hushed as possible.

Rushing out the back, still attached to Toothless's saddle by the waist belt, Naruto hurriedly grabbed his tools before jumping on Toothless's back and ran back to the mountains, leaping and gliding most of the way. He'd just made it out the door when Daisuke came in, lantern in hand, lighting up most of the dark workshop. His eyebrows scrunched together in confusion about to turn and leave, thinking he must have only been hearing things... That is until he noticed Naruto's tools, which had been lying in their places at Naruto's station, were gone.

Daisuke sighed and shook his head with a light smile, knowing Naruto must be working on a secret project.

If only he knew.

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After getting back to the canyon and fixing the saddle's hook, Naruto found Toothless had fallen asleep. So he decided they could fly tomorrow and went home and went to his workshop for some taijutsu practice on the dummy he'd built with pressure points. He wasn't anywhere near mastering his idea seeing as putting the moves together

with the results he wanted were sloppy and his aim on the points he memorized were slightly off, but he was able to see the places where he went wrong easily.

He'd get the hang of it soon.

It was nearing midnight when he'd finally stopped to go up to his room, had some rice balls and instant ramen cups for dinner, took a shower, and went to bed.

As soon as he woke up, after sleeping in for another couple of hours, and went through his morning routine, he went back down to his training room and got back to taijutsu training. His aim was still slightly off but not as much as it had been last night. He needed to be fast for this taijutsu. Unlike his pressure-pointed dummy, his opponents would be moving and a lot harder to defend himself against. When he struck a pressure point in the upper arm, just like it would for a real person, the arm fell limp. He then struck another point in the side of the neck and the whole body fell limp on the floor. He smiled breathlessly at the fallen practice dummy before wiping the sweat of his brow with the back of his hand and taking a few sips from his water bottle. After resetting up the dummy and it's pressure points, he went back to practicing for another hour.

Afterwards, Naruto jogged up to his room for a shower and breakfast before grabbing his tools and heading out to do some hunting and fishing for Toothless.

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Naruto currently found himself on Toothless's back, gliding over the waters about a mile away from the mountains. Today, they were finally going for a real test flight.

"Okay bud, we're going to take this nice and slow. This is our first test run, uh flight." Naruto said giving Toothless a pat on the neck and scanning his sketch of the tail wing positions he'd taped to the saddle. "Okay. Position... three... no, four."

Placing his heel down on the pedal to spread the tail wing, Naruto held on and leaned with Toothless for a slight curve in the air. Checking over the notches and saddle to make sure nothing was loose and looked over his shoulder at the tail wing, Naruto let out a shaky breath, nodding to himself. He couldn't help being excited and nervous at the same time. He faced forwards once more and leaned forwards, gliding with Toothless closer down over the water before going under an arch of rock.

"Yes! It worked!" Naruto couldn't help but shout, not seeing Toothless giving a roll of his eyes.

They tried to curve again, closer to a tall tower of rock only to accidentally smack Toothless's torso into it.

"Sorry!" Naruto shouted over the wind, before trying again in the other direction...

Only to smack Toothless into yet another tower of rock.

"That was my fault!" Naruto said awkwardly.

Toothless, in retaliation, whips his head up sideways to smack the side of Naruto's head with his longest right ear.

"Ow!" Naruto saying shaking his head of the sting. "Yeah, yeah, I'm on it. Position four, uh three."

They took off upwards and Naruto couldn't help letting out an excited shout and laugh as they headed for the clouds. Naruto couldn't help smiling big and closing his eyes with the cool wind blowing his hair back... But, just as he opened his eyes, the tape and tail wing sketch flew up off the saddle.

"Crap, the cheat sheet! Stop!" Naruto shouted trying to grab for the paper.

Toothless stopped as Naruto shouted, right in the air. Just as Naruto got a hold of the paper, neither of them noticed the rings of Naruto's waist belt slipping from their hooks on the saddle until the two of them were falling. Naruto was falling, his limbs waving out helplessly trying to get back on Toothless as Toothless's own form was spiraling under him. The blonde tried to grab onto the dragon's wing only to slip and sending his own body flipping until he was falling stomach-down once again. He tried getting closer to Toothless only to be swatted away in the face by the tail coming around. Shaking off the pain, Naruto put the paper between his teeth and made a sort of swimming motion as Toothless angled himself just enough for Naruto to be able to inch forwards and grabbed onto the saddle.

After seating himself and latching the hooks of his belt back onto their rings, they noticed just how close they were to nosediving into a heavily wooded mountainside. Naruto leaned back sharply, having Toothless spread his wing against the upwind, making the both of them have to squint to see properly over the thick fog and through the sharp wind blowing in their faces. Making sure, he had a good enough hold on the saddle with one hand, Naruto quickly used the other to take the cheat sheet from his mouth to look at. But before he could get a good enough look, he saw that they were clearing through the fog and head straight for a forest of towering rocks with sharp turns and narrow spaces. Letting the cheat sheet fly over his head and grabbing hold of the saddle, Naruto leaned forward, his belly closer to the saddle. He moved his foot on the pedal flying with Toothless, left, right, through the narrow pathways, then curving to fly in a sort of corkscrew move as to not hit anything, swerving and leaning as they soared though out the other side, clear of rock and fog.

Gasping slightly for breath realizing what they just did, Naruto threw his hands up in the air with a smile, "YEEEAAAHH!"

Toothless let his own excitement shout with a plasma blast of lighting ahead of them that burst into a fiery cloud.

Naruto let his hands drop in exasperation seeing it. "Come on..."

The hot orange cloud blew his hair back wildly and singed his clothes

a bit but there was no real damage. Naruto could only shake his head and smile as he couldn't really blame Toothless for being happy. This was Naruto's first time flying but Toothless had just gotten the ability to fly back. They fished a large haul together before flying back to the mountains and landing on one of the rockier but more leveled areas to eat and rest a bit. Toothless laid down on his stomach with the pile of fish in front of him as Naruto slipped down from the saddle and sat down with his back up against Toothless's side. Naruto built a small fire for himself and put a fish on a stick to roast just when he heard Toothless gurgling. He looked over to see the dragon slip the head of the fish he, no doubt, just ate away from his own pile of fish and looked to Naruto in offer.

"Uh... No thanks. I'm good." Naruto said awkwardly with a wave of his fish on a stick.

Toothless just shrugged and was about to get back to eating when they both heard something that sounded like a cross between a bird's caw and a frog croaking. Hearing Toothless hiss, Naruto looked at his scaly friend to see him looking up with narrowed eyes and curling his front legs around his pile of fish protectively. Looking up Naruto's eyes couldn't help widening in surprise.

More dragons.

There really are more dragons!

These ones, though, were quite small. Maybe just a little bigger than a fully grown cat or a seagull. There were four of them. An orange one, a red one, a blue one, and a green one. But they weren't just one solid color with a tint like Toothless. Their bellies, beneath their necks, and beneath their chins were this soft cream color, their claws and the spikes along their backs to the ends of their tails were a darker shade of their own main color and a red/orange, and the scales surrounding the spikes were a light orange that also covered the top of their heads and nose. Their eyes were big, bugged out, and yellow with a black slit pupil, they had a tiny thorn looking horn atop their noses, and the pair of dark brown horns on the back of their heads looked kinda crooked and gnarled.

The four little dragons landed and crawled towards them... or, more specifically, Toothless's pile of fish. Toothless harshly hissed/growled at the blue one, then the orange one, but the red one was able to grab a fish and drag it with it's teeth a few feet away before sitting on it's hind legs satisfied. The orange one tried to sneak in from the side and take the fish the red one just snagged only to be barked at before the red one narrowed it's eyes with a hiss, took a deep breath, and let out a long breath of flame for such a little dragon.

Naruto then watched in amusement as Toothless stared at a fish that seemed to stand up from the middle of the pile and walk a few steps away before it fell over. The little green dragon that had the fish by the tail fin crawled backwards out from under the fish pile and nearly got away until Toothless chomped onto the fish head. Toothless had a short one-sided game of tug-a-war with the little dragon before he gave a sharp yank, snapping the tail fin off and the little dragon with it before swallowing the fish whole like usual. The little dragon, that had fallen back with the tail fin still in it's mouth, rolled onto it's feet, spit out the broken tail fin with angry

narrowed eyes, and started scraping it's front clawed feet against the stone like an angry bull ready to charge.

Toothless just stared with half-lidded eyes unimpressed while Naruto couldn't help showing his growing amusement. The little green dragon took a deep breath, mouth open ready to let out it's flame, making Naruto notice that green colored smoke or gas that gathers in a dragon's throat when they breathe fire. Toothless sort of lazily spat a blueish white spark of his lightning-fire into the little dragon's open mouth, lighting the dragon breath, and causing the little dragon to blow up like a balloon with a flipped jump, and landed forwards on it's head, deflating as a small cloud of gray smoke left it's mouth and nostrils. Naruto couldn't help letting out a laugh as Toothless watched the little dragon smugly as it fell on it's side and stood wobbling dizzily and dazed like a drunk as it made it's way away from the fish pile.

"I guess you guys aren't as fireproof on the inside as you are out." Naruto said with a chuckle before grabbing a fish from his own smaller pile and tossing it in front of the little green dragon. "There you go."

Naruto watched the little dragon look at the fish in surprise for a moment before gobbling it up. Naruto let out a chuckle and sat back against Toothless with an arm resting on a bent knee. The little dragon watched Naruto curiously as it scooted closer to the blonde then scuttled to Naruto's left side brushed under his hand and curled up against stretched out leg cooing and letting it's eyes flutter closed.

Naruto pet the side of the rapidly breathing little dragon with a smile and said, "Huh. Who knew dragon's were such cuddlers... I wish I could see more of you guys." Naruto sighed leaning back and letting his head fall back against Toothless's skin.

Naruto didn't notice Toothless lift his head to look at the blonde curiously a moment before getting back to his meal.

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"Okay, okay. Keep your saddle on, sheesh!" Naruto slightly grumbled at the bat-like dragon.

As soon as he was done with his pile of fish, Toothless started flapping his wings and leaping around before pushing the crown of his head against Naruto's back stand him up. And then, as soon as the blonde was on his feet, Toothless was rushing him to get up onto the dragon-saddle. Naruto didn't know what his rush was. Maybe he just wanted to get back to flying after having been forcibly grounded so long without a tail wing.

Naruto shook his head, half out of amusement by Toothless's excitement and half out of feeling proud of the work he did on the replacement tail. He hated being in the hospital for two reasons. The first being stuck in a room with people not only unwilling to help his injured form but some even tried to get rid of him right then and there through medical means. Second, being unable to move around because those who were willing to help him strapped him to the bed

so he couldn't leave until he was fully healed.

He could only imagine that Toothless was feeling happier to be able to fly again than Naruto leaving the hospital.

They'd been flying for hours and the sun had long since set. At first Toothless just wanted to have some fun flying all over the place and do some ticks but then he started flying off in one direction with a destination in mind. Though he was far from being an expert, Naruto knew enough about navigating with the stars to know they were miles away from Konoha.

"Okay Toothless, seriously, where are you taking me?" Naruto asked his dragon. "I understand your need to fly but I need to be getting back..."

Toothless gave a purr and a huff, telling Naruto to just be patient because they were almost there.

Naruto could only sigh before looking back at the ocean surface sixty feet below them, by Naruto's best guess, he'd been watching since they took flight. Naruto would see a few sea animals here and there, dolphins, whales, sharks, and the like, and couple random rock formations, but other than that, Naruto hadn't seen anything to give him any hint as to where they were going. He knew they didn't really have to worry about going into enemy territory... seeing as all of them were in different directions. So, really, Toothless was running the show right now. Good thing Naruto knew he could trust him.

Naruto got to thinking about the map at home he didn't think he'd need and the one place a dragon had perfect means to get there.

Land of Whirlpool.

The Uzumaki clan's home village.

Someday, even though he knew he wouldn't really find anything there but ruins, he wanted to see it.

Something up ahead within the shadow of night suddenly caught his eye.

Fog.

A really thick cloud of fog that spread for miles.

They'd flown right through it, having to duck, turn, and dodge these huge claw-like stone pillars within the fog from time to time. Toothless started flying faster and the wind picked up a bit, whistling in his ears. The fog was even thicker than Naruto thought seeing as when he look down at Toothless, he could just barely see his dragon's head unless he leaned forwards.

Then, just as suddenly as the fog had appeared, it began to clear and the number of hooked stone columns lessened, revealing a mountain face with several dozen entrances into the mountain beyond the peek of the rocky walls. Toothless went down and landed on the stone floor of the rocky beach and brought them over to a small empty cave before letting Naruto slide off his back. Naruto thought about looking

around a bit but knew there wouldn't be much point until sunrise. He turned to question Toothless, only to see his dragon go a few feet deeper into the cave and lie down to sleep.

Naruto sighs and shakes his head. He didn't bother arguing though, as he went to sit with his back against Toothless's side to sleep. Toothless would be too tired to fly them back to Konoha and it wasn't like Naruto had any other means to get home.

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Naruto woke with a jolt, having been jostled awake by Toothless standing from his sleeping spot. Stretching and yawning, Naruto stood as well looking out to the cave entrance to see the sun was completely up and shining brightly. The fog from last night had cleared as well. Naruto tiredly combed a hand through his hair when Toothless bumped his nose against the blonde's side and motioned for Naruto to get into the saddle.

"Alright, alright." Naruto muttered with another yawn as he climb up onto the saddle.

As soon as he was hooked on, Toothless took flight but didn't leave the island. Naruto rubbed his eyes tiredly as Toothless landed somewhere on the other side of the mountain face. Naruto took a tired blinking look around the scenery and was about to yawn again when he did a double take in shock. His eyes widened and jaw slowly fell open as he slid off of Toothless's saddle to see if he wasn't just seeing things.

Dragons...

Dozens of them!

Everywhere!

All of them in many different colors, shapes, and sizes. Some even had more than one head!

Toothless had trusted him enough to show him the Dragon's Nest.

Naruto let out a huffed laugh before he gave a shout of glee and laughing in disbelief.

Some of the more curious dragons examining him as he got closer to one of the smaller but bulkier looking ones that had ears that looked like little bat wings atop it's head. Naruto sat down before taking out his sketchbook and charcoal pencils. He looked up a couple times at the dragon as he was drawing it, barely noticing some baby dragons come over to look at what he was doing. Naruto hadn't known they were there until a chibi version of the dragon he was drawing clumsily climbed up to his head before falling into his lap. He sat still a moment as another baby dragon, this one a chibi of the two headed dragons, latched onto his back and looked over each of his shoulders with each head. He noticed more baby dragons around and smiled as he

went back to drawing.

Good thing he had plenty of sketch paper because he was going to be busy.

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4. Chapter 4

I do not own Naruto or any of the dragons in this fanfic.

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Chapter Four

Naruto had been sketching the dragons in one of his sketchbooks and, to a few of the dragons, he even gave a personal name to call them like he had Toothless.

He named the bulkier dragon he first started to draw Meatlug. She was a chubby but bulky looking rocky spiked and brown skinned dragon with smallish wings you'd never really think were able to carry her weight. Her head was round and among all her pointy fangs were a pair of larger tusk-like fangs on her bottom jaw. She had a curved triangular nose that pointed upwards and yellow/orange eyes. She likes rolling around on her back to sleep, playing with the baby dragons, and eating rocks.

He named the largest one he drew Hookfang. He was huge! Hookfang was a red and burnt orange color with black stripes and his spine was covered with thin but flared spikes from the back of his head to the end of his long tail. Unlike Toothless and Meatlug, Hookfang only had two legs while he could fold up his large spiky wings and use them as another pair with talon fingers like bat would. He had a long jawline with hook-like fangs that stuck out everywhere. He had large nostrils and a black horn atop his nose that curved back and two sets of horns atop his head, the smaller frontal horns curved out to the sides while the back horns were twice as long and went back. He has a habit of spitting up pools of lava and lighting his body on fire.

One of the spikier dragons, Naruto named Stormfly. She was a blue color with yellow on the inside of her wings, yellow rings around her needle/dart like spike covered tail, and there were reddish scales here and there on her knees, atop her wings, around her yellowish oval shaped eyes, atop the crown of her head, and along her spinal column with a trail of spikes leading to her tail. Stormfly looked rather like a bird shaped dragon. Like Hookfang, she only had one pair of legs but, unlike Hookfang and like a bird, she didn't use her wings like an extra pair of legs. Her head was curved into a downwards point at the mouth a bit like a parrot's beak but with fangs. Atop her nose was a thick yellowish horn that curve back while atop her head were multiple horns shaped into a spiky crown. Stormfly was fast and when threatened she retaliates with a swish of her whip-like tail that sends spike-darts at her attacker.

The last dragon Naruto drew was a little difficult to name seeing as two heads reacted to different things and had different abilities. Then, on a whim, he just named them Barf and Belch. Barf and Belch were lime greenish with red spots, and instead of horns aligning the back of their spine and necks, they had these red flaps of skin. They had round snapping turtle-like heads with a curved back horn just above their nostrils between their large yellow eyes and a pair of thinner longer horns atop their heads that went straight at angle. They have two pairs of short legs and a triangular torso, with a long tail that splits in two. Their wings are rather thin and wide. Barf can breathe out this green gas that leaves you light headed and stomach upset if you breathe it in. Belch coughs, or burps, up sparks that can make Barf's gas light on fire with an explosion.

After it got to about midday, Naruto decided it was time to go back to Konoha.

He knew there had to be something, no matter what little info, in Konoha's library about dragons. He wanted to compare what he found out to what the people back then knew. After getting back to Toothless's canyon, Naruto was about to rush off to Konoha's library only to realize it was still daytime. They would never let him in. He would have to wait for night to fall to sneak in like usual.

With that, Naruto went to the shop. Work would get his mind off things.

"Hey Daisuke." Naruto greets the elder blacksmith as he enters the workshop.

"Naruto, good, you're just in time." Daisuke said with a hint of relief.

"For what?" Naruto asked curiously.

"We've been assigned work outside the village." Daisuke said going to the workshop.

Naruto follows him and sees that some of Daisuke tools are packed and Daisuke hauls a sack of tools out. Naruto rushes to help and grabs another sack before following the old man to a cart and a carriage horse he hadn't noticed outside the shop when he got there.

"... This doesn't seem like another outside works job we've gotten before, Daisuke." Naruto said a bit plainly, looking for explanation.

Daisuke didn't disappoint.

"That's because it isn't." Daisuke said with a grunt as he tossed the tool sack into the cart before turning to Naruto and taking the tools Naruto was carrying to toss in as well. "There was a request sent to the Hokage from an outside village being attacked by a gang of bandits nearly every night or two for the past two to three weeks. Benkei Village doesn't normally ask for outside help because of the warrior monks that live there. They mainly requested help in fixing things and reconstruction but the Hokage insisted on sending at least two or three ANBU who are leaving ahead of time, now, while the three of us go in the morning with a small number of reconstruction

workers."

"Okay. Wait... The three of us? You don't mean-"

"Yes. Tenten is coming too." Daisuke said going back to the should to pack with Naruto right behind him.

"Ugh! Seriously? She hates me!" Naruto said throwing his arms up in exasperation.

"Tenten doesn't hate you. She's just stubborn and bitter when she's proven wrong."

"Which I've done."

"So have I." Daisuke said amused.

"That's different." Naruto argued. "You're her grandfather. She learns from you and your years of experience. I go to school with her and I'm a year below her. She doesn't seem to understand that age makes no difference when it comes to living and surviving, especially when you're a ninja. While Tenten's far from being spoiled like Sasuke, she seems to think that being a ninja is the only job of any importance at all. She wants to be a weapon's mistress and while that in itself will take hard work, I'll admit, she doesn't realize how hard we work on making the weapons she wants to master. That and she's going to have to learn about more than just weapons and basic ninja lessons to get anywhere in life as a ninja and/or otherwise."

"And by going on this assignment with us, she may just learn that ninja's aren't the only fighters out there and aren't the only people needed." Daisuke countered as he picked up the last sack of tools.

"Now go home, pack, and rest up. I don't know how long we're going to be gone but we leave first thing sunrise. Benkei Village is three days carriage travel alone."

Naruto sighed and left. He paused midway in the direction of his apartment building before rushing to Hokage mountain and Toothless's canyon. If he didn't know how long he'd be gone, he didn't want to leave Toothless trapped in the canyon where he'd starve and die. He hunts a couple boars and gathers a large haul of fish on the way to the canyon and seals the food into scrolls. When he reaches his dragon's canyon, Naruto's glad that Toothless is hiding because he realizes he's been followed when he hears a sort of scuffle of dirt and rocks, of someone entering the canyon behind him. He new it wasn't Toothless, because Toothless is already somewhere in the canyon, he didn't need to enter it.

He'd been so focused on getting to Toothless's canyon, he'd let his guard down.

When you're looking to be a ninja, letting your guard down is always a mistake.

He doesn't hesitate to throw several kunai as a warning and as soon as his unwanted shadow came out of hiding, Naruto tackled them to the ground and put kunai to their throat.

It was Tenten.

"What are you doing here?" Naruto demanded as he stood.

Tenten stood as well with a scowl. "None of your—"

"Don't you dare say it's none of my business just because I caught you following me!" Naruto shouted at her angrily, making her jolt back in surprise. "What I do is none of your business unless I want you to know. Go home Tenten, I've got work to do."

"So do I!" Tenten shouted stubbornly. "I'm going on that assignment with you and grandpa too!"

So she'd been following him since he left the shop. And he didn't notice until he'd reached his destination.

Damnit.

"I know." Naruto said crossing his arms in irritation. "But I have a few errands to run before I go pack and rest up to leave tomorrow. What does you following me have anything to do with the assignment?"

Tenten looked ready to defend herself but there was nothing she could say in argument.

Groowwl!

Naruto and Tenten both stiffened at the sound but for different reasons. Tenten was afraid of what had made the sound and Naruto because Tenten was there to hear it in the first place.

"Shit!" Naruto cursed under his breath just as he turned to see Toothless leap out of his hiding place.

"Get down!" Tenten shouted tackling him to the ground from behind.

Seeing this and thinking it was an attack on his human, Toothless charges over to save Naruto.

"Run, run!" Tenten shouted at the blonde as she stood and unsealed her favorite naginata and readied it to strike.

"No!" Naruto said tackling her back and tossing her naginata to the side before standing in front of Toothless with his arms out at the charging dragon. "Toothless stop!"

Toothless reared back to stop on his hind legs with his wings still open in a threatening manor, eyes still narrowed. Tenten could only watch, sitting there on the ground, both in terror and in awe.

"Easy bud." Naruto said more calmly, getting his dragon to calm down enough to get back down on all fours and close his wings less threateningly but still open. "It's okay. I may not want her here but she's not an enemy."

Toothless let out a grumbled purr in response without taking his angry eyes off Tenten.

Naruto turned back to the girl while placing his hands Toothless's head to keep his dragon from attacking. "You just scared him as all."

"_I _scared _him_?!" Tenten shouted in confusion and anger as she stood, only to take a step back in fear when Toothless hissed at her.

"He thought you were attacking me when you tackled me." Naruto said in Toothless's defense.

"Who-_What _is _him_?" Tenten said more quietly in demand.

Naruto sighed standing straighter, motioning to the girl and dragon with his hands as he introduced them. "Tenten, Toothless. Toothless, Tenten."

Toothless, eyes still narrowed in a threatening way at Tenten, only barred his teeth and hissed.

"... He doesn't _look_ toothless." Tenten said though her teeth.

"His teeth are retractable." Naruto explained flatly. "He only really has them out when he's angry, feeling threatened, or eating. Right now, with _you_ here, he feels the first two."

"You sure it's not the _third_?" Tenten asked in an obvious tone.

"Dragons don't eat people." Naruto said plainly. "They mostly eat fish."

"... _Dragon_...?" Tenten breathed in disbelief.

"Which reminds me..." Naruto said taking out a scroll and unsealing the haul of fish and the boars he hunted. "Eat up bud." Naruto said motioning to the fish as he got to skinning the boars while the dragon went right to eating. "After we eat we're going to fly for bit but you're staying out of the canyon this time."

Toothless looked up from his fish in question.

"I'm going on assignment outside the village and I don't know when I'll be back." Naruto explained to his dragon as he set up the fire pit he'd built after the first couple of times eating in the canyon with Toothless. "So it's best to keep you out of the canyon so you can hunt on your own. Just make sure no one sees you."

Toothless scoffs knowingly as he went back to his meal.

This made Naruto smile in amusement before he said, "That also means no flying for awhile."

Toothless looked up again in question and demand.

"Well, without me, how else would you be able to anyway?" Naruto asked the dragon as the fire pit lit up.

Toothless sighed and shook his head before getting back to his

fish.

Tenten, having observing them from the last couple minutes, only just now noticed the saddle on the dragons back connected to the tail with it's own wing.

"... You built him a tail wing..." Tenten said in realization.

"Had to." Naruto said as he sat back watching the boars cook over the fire. "It's my fault he lost it in the first place."

Tenten could only look at Naruto curiously for another couple of minutes before slowly and cautiously moving towards her naginata, ignoring the way both Naruto's and the dragon's eyes followed her every movement from over their shoulders. They went back to their own business when she picked it up and sealed it back into her weapons scroll. Tenten stood still another moment before heading over to sit by Naruto between the fire pit cooking the two boars and the creature she just found out wasn't as extinct as everyone thought. She sat half a yard away from Naruto, hugging her knees to her chest as her eyes wavered over to the dragon from time to time, still fearful but just as curious.

"How do you mean... it's your fault?" Tenten asked slowly, looking over to Naruto, who still hadn't taken his eyes off the fire.

"I was hunting a couple wild boars to test something." Naruto said. "I built a bola launcher. It's sort of a cross between a crossbow and a catapult that launches a six stone extra long roped bola at any target within thirty feet, if not a little further, with just a twitch of a finger on a hair trigger. I made sure I was up here in the mountains because I didn't want to accidentally capture any training ninja or civilian on a walk. Toothless and I..." Naruto said glancing over his shoulder to meet eye with the dragon and smiled as he went back to watching the boars cook and Toothless went back to eating. "We were hunting the same game. I was about to pull the trigger when this big black blur came out of nowhere and I accidentally set off the launcher, missing the boars and catching my fellow hunter instead... The strike of the bola tore off his tail wing and he was trapped in this canyon because of me. I was curious about him, so I stuck around. He tolerated me because I gave him food. We formed a sort of bond and during the time it took for me to build and improve the replacement tail wing, we became friends."

"Are there any more of... him?" Tenten asked carefully.

"... Who knows?" Naruto said with a shrug.

He knew she meant dragons and would've just outright lied to her saying he didn't know or that he was sure there weren't, but Naruto grew curious with the thought. Were there other dragon's like Toothless? He didn't find any on that island. He saw dozens of the dragons he drew, but Toothless seemed to be one of a kind.

Naruto shook his head of the thought as he poked at the fire and checked the boars to see they were done and took them down.

If there were other dragons that breathed lightning like Toothless, he'd be sure to find them.

Tossing one boar to Toothless's pile of fish, Naruto kept the other to share with Tenten

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"Are you sure this is safe?"

"It will be as long as you hold onto me."

Tenten took a deep breath to strengthen her resolve before taking Naruto's hand and hauling herself up onto the dragon saddle behind him. She gingerly put her hands on Naruto's sides only to wind her arms around his torso in panic when they took flight straight up out of the canyon, out of the mountains, and over the sea. Toothless wanted some fun doing tricks but still toned them down a bit for Tenten. It was when the sun was starting to set and they flew among the clouds so she could just reach out and touch them, that Tenten really started to enjoy herself.

As the sky turned orange with splashes purple, they flew back to the mountains and Naruto slid off the saddle, helping Tenten follow, just a few yards from the canyon.

"Now, like I said before, I don't know when I'll be back but you should be fine hunting on your own out of the canyon till I get back." Naruto told Toothless. "You want me to leave the saddle on or take it off?"

Toothless shook his head and bumped his nose against the blonde's chest, telling him to go and rest.

"Alright. I'll see you when I get back." Naruto promised with a smile giving Toothless a couple pats on the head.

Tenten just watched the exchange curiously as she followed Naruto back to the village. She still didn't know how he managed to walk up the mountain face as if it were the ground. Naruto found he had to carry her, because it was faster than following the trails. Tenten absolutely refused to blush being carried bridal style down the mountain by the blonde.

"How are you doing this anyway?" Tenten asked. "Is this some sort of clan ability?"

"What, walking on the side of the mountain? No." Naruto said with a little laugh. "This is just a chakra training technique you'd learn after graduating."

"Then why do you know it?" Tenten asked confused.

"Because I make ninja weapons." Naruto said a bit flatly. "Some weapons need to have chakra focused into the metal as it's cooling so it can be used with some jutsu and others can be rather special. I'd need to have near perfect chakra control to be able to use such a weapon, much less make one."

"So my grandfather taught you?" Tenten asked.

"Not just him. Why are you so interested in me all of a sudden?"
Naruto asked as they reached the bottom of the mountain and put
Tenten back on her feet. "You still haven't told me why you followed
me either."

"I was actually going to challenge you to another spar after I heard
you and Grandfather talking about me." Tenten said a bit embarrassed.
"I wanted to prove our tanto spar was a fluke. When you went running
towards the Hokage Monument instead of following my grandfather's
orders to go home, I grew curious. You always listen to
Grandpa."

Naruto stared at her for a moment with an eyebrow raised before
shrugging to himself and shaking his head as he left for home. Tenten
was quick to follow before they went in separate directions at the
end of the street. What neither of them knew was that a certain
thought-to-be-extinct creature with a replacement tail wing had
followed them to the village but stayed within the trees and shadows
where no one would see him now or come sunrise.

Once Naruto got home, he packed his tools, some books, extra clothes,
notebooks, a couple of his sketchbooks, and basic travel items into
sealing scrolls before putting them into his tool bag. He remembered
he still needed to sneak into the library to find whatever info he
could on dragons. So as soon as the sun was down and the librarian
locked up and left, Naruto snuck in through the roof window like he
usually did.

He started with the myths and legends section because while dragon's
were thought to be extinct and were real at one point in time, most
legends were born from truth. He found several books on dragons in
the fiction section. Done with that section, he went to the history
shelves. He found three, just three books on dragons in the history
section. He was going to read the books when he had the chance but
first he was just going to gather what he could and rest for the trip
in the morning. He'd already spent an hour looking for the books he'd
found.

Sealing the books from the library into a scroll, he left through the
window he entered swiftly and sprinted home through the shadows of
night. He finally let his guard down when he was inside his apartment
building, shoulders slouching tiredly as he let out a loud yawn.
After stripping down to his boxers, the blonde blacksmith fell asleep
as soon as his head hit the pillow.

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Two other carriages carrying the supplies and seventeen construction
workers, with Daisuke's own carriage leading the way, set out of
Konoha for Benkei Village the following morning. During the three
days travel, Naruto did his best to ignore Tenten's questioning gaze.
The reason for the questioning looks was for the cold words and icy
stares he got from the village construction workers every minute that
passed. Naruto was too used to such things to really put up the
effort of really acknowledging them. A questioning look as to why

such coldness was directed at him, which he didn't even know as to why, was a bit more difficult to ignore.

He got out one of the books on dragons he'd taken from the fiction section of the library. It was interesting to say the least, but not exactly what he was looking for. This book as well as the few that followed in his reading were truly just stories of ancient, magical, wise or sometimes mindless, beasts that could transform into humans, granted people power, were slayed for terrorizing villages and/or kingdoms just for the heck of it, or taking princesses hostage or to be their bride until the princes came to save them.

Entertaining, yes. Useful, no.

On the first night of rest from travel, Naruto stopped short of slicing one of the worker's head off with his sword for trying to steal his things while he was sleeping and tied him up before hanging him by the feet in a tree for Daisuke to deal with in the morning instead.

The young blonde blacksmith thought he must've been hearing things or missing Toothless when a growl sounding through the trees distracted the man and woke Naruto.

It was probably just the wolves.

Some of the village workers tried to defend the thief and demanded Naruto be punished once they all woke up at sunrise. That is until Daisuke made a promise to inform the Hokage of someone attempting to steal from the blacksmith's apprentice, who was still in the ninja academy, and anyone who thought they were in the right of doing so. They grumbled a bit in private protest afterwards but otherwise stopped arguing.

The next day of travel, Tenten stopped giving Naruto questioning looks and started giving the village workers her own glare while sharpening all her weapons one by one while Naruto spent the travel time practicing in memorizing pressure points and reading the last of the dragon books from the fiction section.

These were of an old four-part series. The books were so old, the only thing keeping them from falling apart were the wear-and-tear-resistant seals painted recent on the inside of the cover in the front and back. The series was crudely written and rather narcissistic, to say the least. But it did bring about a rather curious thought as to why dragons were thought to be extinct. The series spoke of a man, a viking, who called himself Magnus the Dragon Slaying Magnificent, which was also the title of all four books, the only difference being the books numbered 1, 2, 3, and 4.

The series went on and on in Magnus's point of view of how he slayed certain dragons he called Nadders, Nightmares, Zipplebacks, or something and more. What truly caught Naruto's interest and got him to continue reading, were the crudely drawn charcoal pictures of the dragons Magnus gloated to have fought and defeated. These were the dragons that Naruto had sketched on Dragon Isle, among others he hadn't seen. If anything Magnus wrote of gave any hint, Dragon Slaying was something of a daily occurrence, job, and sport hundreds of years ago.

It certainly explained a few things.

Naruto finished reading through the agonizing narcissistic writing of _Magnus the Dragon Slaying Magnificent_ and started reading one of the three books he got from the history section. This one was still old, but more recently written than the other two. It was written by a ninja, a little over half a century ago, and over a century later than when the dragons were "proven" to be extinct.

The ninja, Hoten Misamaki, was an archaeologist by passion and ninja by career. He was curious about the creatures who'd supposedly long since died and wrote about some bones he'd found that no doubt belonged to what Magnus referred to as a Cauldron. Hoten compared the skeleton to that of a colossus lizard-like fish with wings and two pairs of legs. Something must have happened for the creature to be stranded on land, unable to get back to where it lived in the water, and died just like a fish would out of water.

On the second night of rest from travel, Naruto got to test his pressure point combat skill on another two of the workers when they thought stealing Tenten's weapons scrolls and blaming Naruto would be a better idea. Naruto was still a bit sloppy with the taijutsu he was developing, but he got the basics down enough to leave both men unable to walk for at least twenty-four hours.

After all, any longer than that and without their arms, they'd be useless on this trip.

Naruto thought he heard Toothless's growl again waking him, but shook it off thinking it was the wolves again.

When morning came and everyone found the men gagged and tied to a tree, Daisuke asked Naruto what happened this time while they ignored the demands of the other worker for Naruto to be punished yet again. Once Naruto explained he'd woken up to the image of the two taking Tenten's scrolls from her person and trying to put them in Naruto's bag, Tenten went ballistic.

Daisuke had to stop her from totally killing the two men after letting her beat them to a bloody pulp and then some.

Needless to say, the village workers finally learned their lesson this time. They left Naruto alone, deciding to ignore him rather than act on their feelings, and shivered whenever Tenten looked in their direction during the last day of travel.

Naruto read the other two history section books on dragons up until they reached Benkei Village's borders.

These ones were even older than Magnus's, though not by much, probably by about a decade or two. The first was a short and somewhat useless guide to slaying dragons. It explained that the first thing you'd want to do is go for the wings and/or tail. _A downed dragon is a dead one_, the book said. Then it went on about cutting off the limbs and head for a trophy to show off your skill in dragon slaying. When all the talk of how to's on killing ended it started on how to go about attacking a dragon the viking way. Holding a weapon high above your head and giving your loudest shout of _YAARRRG!_ or something similar while sprinting towards a giant fire breathing

monster.

Yeah, that's brilliant.

The last book grabbed more of Naruto's interest. It actually had greatly detailed drawn pictures and names of dozens of different dragons and their abilities. The only thing that kind of threw Naruto off was how each and every page turned ended with how these dragons killed and that how every single one of them were extremely dangerous and should be killed on sight. Naruto searched the book, memorizing page after page of the few dragon's he sketched himself and the many dragon's he'd yet to discover. It was nearing the end of the book where he found the rarer and most dangerous of dragons.

Screaming Death. A dragon hatched from a Whispering Death egg every one hundred years. It's three to four times the size of the average Whispering Death with none of the weaknesses and brings about ten times more the destruction. The only thing you can really do if you come across this dragon is stay out of it's way. Naruto, while curious, was glad he hadn't seen any Screaming Death yet.

Skrill... This dragon caught Naruto's attention more because of the lighting based attacks like Toothless. He thought Toothless might be a Skrill until he saw that their were too many differences. Skrills were a lot more spiky, only had one pair of legs, didn't have ears like Toothless, and could only be found during lightning storms.

It was when Naruto turned the next page did he find that he was the first person to ever really see a dragon like Toothless because the vikings had never been able to catch sight of this dragon much less slay it.

A Night Fury. The only things that could be said for sure about a Night Fury was that they were perfect hunters that never missed their targets and that they were the unholy offspring of Lightning and Death.

Toothless had to be a Night Fury. Nothing else fit.

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5. Chapter 5

I don't own Naruto or any dragon in this fanfic.

And sorry for those of you waiting for action, you won't be getting much of any of that in this **chapter.**

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Chapter Five

When they got to Benkei Village, Naruto couldn't stop himself from getting to his feet to see if what he was seeing was actually right.

He could only describe it in thirds.

The first third, he was not the only one staring at as they entered the village.

It was in ruins. Simple as that.

A third, a bit further ahead of them, was under reconstruction by work of the villagers living there, the ANBU sent ahead from Konoha assisting them, along with the warrior monks in orange garbs.

The last third, much further ahead, where Naruto could see the stone steps to a shrine temple atop a hill, was still standing at least. Looking nearly untouched by the bandits who no doubt caused all the damage.

Naruto was happy that the ANBU the old fire shadow sent ahead of time were three of the eight masks he was most familiar with. Dog, Snake, and Cat.

Dog was the first of two ANBU to ever approach him on a personal level to actually strike up a conversation. He seemed out of it most of the time and always seemed to have his porcelain masked nose in the pages of a porn novel.

Snake was a bit bloodthirsty... and seemed to act first and think later sometimes. She got Naruto interested to basic healing when she asked to test some poisons on him... after already injecting him with the poison she wanted to test at the time.

Cat and her boyfriend, ANBU Lizard, were the two who got him into learning how to use the weapons he'd begun to make. Lizard was said to be one of Konoha's few swordmasters and one of even fewer ninja, of any continent, to have some lessons from the Samurai of the Land of Iron.

Dog leaped down from the rooftop he was helping rebuild to greet them, followed by one of the warrior monks. Dog set orders to the Leaf village workers before turning back to Naruto, Daisuke, and Tenten.

"This is Yoshito." Dog said motioning to the monk standing beside him. "One of the many warrior monks I'm sure you've noticed already. Yoshito, this is our village blacksmith Daisuke Yakedo, his apprentice Naruto Uzumaki, and his granddaughter Tenten."

Yoshito, like all the warrior monks, had his head completely shaved, wore this long sleeve orange keikogi with matching full cut pants, white cloth wrapped around his shins, tied with thin black ropes, white socks, and flat black shoes. He only looked a few years older than Naruto and Tenten.

Yoshito bowed in greeting. "We thank you for your assistance. One of Benkei's six blacksmiths was killed in the first attack this week and another fatally injured. The fatally injured died the next afternoon and a third was killed in the last attack just last

night."

"We'll do all we can to help." Daisuke promised. "Can you show us where the workshop is?"

"Of course. I should introduce you as well." Yoshito said climbing up to sit next to Naruto. "Take this street and turn on the fourth left."

"I'll see you three later." Dog said, leaping back to where he'd been working as the blacksmith carriage pulled away.

Turning to Naruto, Yoshito eyed the blonde a bit before turning to the elder blacksmith. "Mr. Yakedo, he's awfully young to be a blacksmith. Is there anyone else you could've brought? And what of your granddaughter? She could get hurt during your stay."

"And you're awfully rude for a monk to speak as though we're not even here." Naruto said flatly, gaining back Yoshito's attention while Tenten was too infuriated to say anything. "You're not much older than us and you don't know of our skills. So instead of assuming we're defenseless children, you could ask yourself why he would have reason to bring us somewhere under almost constant attack by dangerous bandits in the first place rather than question if it was a good idea."

"Naruto has a point there." Daisuke said. "They both attend ninja academy and Naruto's the only other blacksmith in Konoha. I brought them here because your village is short on blacksmiths for rebuilding, ninja academy is closed until further notice, for some reason, leaving Tenten with nothing better to do than guard a weapons/work shop that doesn't need guarding, and both of them can defend themselves just fine."

Yoshito only blinked blankly before saying. "I apologize then."

Naruto gave a short polite nod but Tenten was still fuming.

After Yoshito directed them down another street and another turn, they stopped in front of an open hut next to brown barn house. The three blacksmiths still alive stopped what they were doing and one stepped out from under the open hut as Yoshito climbed down from the carriage followed by their three visitors.

"Takato, Genki, and Kiro." Yoshito greeted the three with a bow. "This is Konoha's blacksmith Mr. Yakedo, his apprentice Mr. Uzumaki, and granddaughter Miss. Yakedo. They will be helping you in the time they are here."

"That kid is a blacksmith?" The shirtless and well-muscled but not over bulky one with dark grey eyes, his dark brown hair in a low pony tail that stopped mid-back, bandages wrapped around his upper left arm, a healing gash on his right cheek below his eye, the top of his overalls hanging at his hips said skeptically. "He barely looks old enough to be a student at the temple." He was Kiro.

"Is it really alright?" The one with similar features as Kiro but with his shoulder length hair loose, shirtless, open brown leather jacket, a whip chain wrapped around his waist, and an old pair of

jeans asked a bit more humbly. "He is rather young and he doesn't look strong enough to handle most of the equipment." This was Takato, Kiro's twin.

The last one simply gave a grunt of agreement with the other two. He was older, looking to be in his late forties while the other two in their late twenties. He had slightly spiky short black hair, narrow black eyes that looked closed most of the time, a diagonal from left to right scar on the front of his chin, four o'clock shadow, tanned skin, a white cloth tied around his brow to keep his hair out of his eyes, shirtless, overalls up, brown leather wrist guards, and eyebrows scrunched in a small frown. This was Genki.

"Instead of judging me by age and appearance maybe you should see what I can do first." Naruto said flatly. "Or rather you should take what you can get at a time like this."

The three blacksmiths were still skeptical but otherwise agreed.

With the heat beating down on them, even under the hut, Daisuke and Naruto went shirtless as well as they got to work.

Needless to say, the three blacksmiths began to take Naruto seriously about midway through the day especially when Tenten started throwing shurikan at him and catching them as he threw them back while working and not letting it distract him.

As soon as Naruto was done with the hook swords that had seemed beyond repair in the beginning, he set them down and sighed with a hint of frustration.

"Tenten, is that really necessary?" Naruto asked her, looking over to his left at her through his goggles where she sat twirling a kunai around her index finger lazily.

"I'm bored." She said plainly tossing the kunai at him.

Naruto caught the kunai and stabbed the point into the work table. "Then why don't you help in rebuilding the village with the ANBU? Instead of sitting around doing nothing of importance, you could actually help_. Is this what you plan to do on missions when you graduate from ninja academy?"

"Of course not!" Tenten exclaimed furiously, sitting up to look at him. "That could get me killed!"

"THEN GET TO WORK!" He snapped making her flinch back a bit in surprise. Even the other four blacksmiths jumped a bit. "This village is constantly under attack which means those bandits could show up at any time. You should be doing something useful and you need to be ready. Just because this is not a ninja assignment doesn't make it any less important."

With that, Naruto turned back to the work table and went to work on a bent and broken nine section whip.

Tenten stared at his form for a bit blinking before standing and going out to do as Naruto suggested, feeling a slight bit abashed.

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><p>When Naruto is finished fixing the warrior monk weapons, he and Kiro loaded the weapons into a couple of large straw baskets to carry on their backs to the temple while Genki and Takato leave the shop to aid the rest of the village in reconstruction.</p>

Kiro is surprised that Naruto has not complained about the trek up the stone steps to the temple. When asked why, Naruto merely replies, "What kind of blacksmith and ninja trainee would I be if I could not handle this?"

Kiro snorts at this though he couldn't hold back an impressed smile.

The older blacksmith's smile widens when they reach the top of the steps and notices that Naruto can't help looking around in awe just seeing the front of the shrine and parts of the temple.

"Hey, you're a visitor here, why don't you take a look around?" Kiro suggests.

Naruto's snaps out of his daze and looks to Kiro. "You sure?" He asked. "Would they be okay with that?"

"Sure, I got this." Kiro assures him. "The monks here are warriors but they welcome newcomers, though some with caution."

"I would too with what's been going on." Naruto said understandably.

"Yeah..." Kiro said a bit more sadly before shaking his head clear of it. "Go ahead. I'll call you when it's time to head back to the shop. I got to talk to some of the monks here to see if they need anything else fixed but we're most likely done for the day to help with reconstruction."

"... Okay." Naruto says taking the basket of weapons he carried from his back and handing it over to Kiro.

He has to admit, he is rather curious.

Naruto explores the shrine and meditation gardens. The monks there took notice with the raising of an eyebrow or a glance here and there, but otherwise ignored him and let him be. Soon enough, the young blacksmith finds himself at the Warrior Monks' training grounds. They're a lot like the ninja training grounds back home actually, with just a few minor differences. Far off to the side of the training grounds ahead of him, beyond the group of monks practicing their tai chi chuan, were a line of monks. Some as old as Old man Hokage and some as young as himself if not a little older. They all stood back from several targets with bows and arrows in hand.

This is what really caught his eye.

They were standing much further from their targets with their bows

and arrows than Naruto had seen any shinobi with a kunai or shurikan. Naruto watched in awe as the line of monks took aim and let their arrows fly at different times. The concentration and focus they had was impressive enough, the fact that most if not all the arrows struck their targets dead center for the older and a couple of younger monks was even more so. The only arrows that did not hit the center of the targets or near enough were the monks in training who obviously hadn't been at this as long as the other archers.

Judging by how those particular monks' arrows just barely hit the target at all and the older monks standing by to correct their stances proved they were novices. It was understandable.

One of the older monks, looking around Hokage-jiji's age with a long gray beard and mustache, looked up at Naruto having noticed the blonde watching in awe.

Naruto went to leave. He wanted to watch some more but the monks may not be as welcoming as Kiro lead him to believe. The people from his home village hated him for no reason, why wouldn't the monks?

Naruto turned only to nearly bump into another one of the younger monks, this one looking to be a little older than Yoshito and instantly scowling at him.

"Watch where you're going outsider!" He all but spat. "What're you even doing here?!"

'Yep. Just like home.' Naruto thought with an inward sigh.

"Kurojiro." A strong scolding tone warned from behind Naruto.

Naruto looked over his shoulder to see the elder monk who'd noticed him staring from the archery range.

"Don't be so rude to guests in the village." The older monk lightly scolded before smiling at Naruto. "Hello young one. Did you come here from Konoha?"

"Yeah." Naruto said with a nod. "I'm a blacksmith and ninja in training."

"Ha!" The young rude monk, Kurojiro, scoffed. "You didn't even notice my approach! You are no ninja!"

"I never said I was one. I said I was in training to be a ninja. I am first and foremost a blacksmith and proudly so." Naruto corrected him. "And I don't sense things I don't view as a threat."

Kurojiro fumes, ready to bark more insults at the blonde but the older monk interrupts. "Ah, so you are Daisuke's apprentice."

"You know Daisuke?" Naruto asks giving the older monk a small smile.

"More of an old acquaintance really." The old man said with his own smile. "We met when he was still a ninja."

"I see. Well, yes, I am Daisuke's apprentice. I'm Naruto. I came from

the shop with Kiro to deliver the weapons we fixed. I'm sorry if I was interrupting your archery class."

"There's no need to apologize for merely observing." The old man assured him before gaining a thoughtful look in his twinkling black eyes. "Do you like archery?"

"I've heard of it but I've never really seen it been done before seeing as this is the first time I've ever been outside my village." Naruto said honestly, slightly embarrassed.

"I see... Would you like to try?"

"Can I really?" Naruto asked in obvious excitement.

"But Master Hotaka!" Kurojiro argued. "He is not a monk! He's training to be a ninja! A _killer _for hire!"

"It is the art of kyujutsu I am offering not the way of the monk. How he uses such a gift is his choice to make just as it is for anyone else. And you know very well we offer lessons of defense and more to the villagers whether they follow our ways or not Kurojiro."

"But he is not even _of_ this village!" Kurojiro argued further.

"And our lessons are not limited to this land, just those who don't truly wish to learn them." Hotaka said as he lead Naruto to stand with the other archers.

(Naruto P.O.V)

I stand there as Hotaka adjusts my arms to hold a bow correctly. I hold the bow and notch the arrow in hand. I try to imagine how similar this would be to throwing a kunai... but I can't. Because I'm not throwing anything. I'm taking aim and letting an arrow fly to a target a kunai wouldn't reach. I then think about the bola launcher, since that's at least similar, and catching Toothless.

Toothless...

I close my eyes, unintentionally, as I suddenly begin to think about flying.

My fingers gripping the leather covered handles of the saddle. My body leaning forward as Toothless and I fly down to skim over the ocean surface and then leaning back as we head back up into the clouds. Gliding through the air and soaring to impossible heights. The wind blowing through my hair...

A breeze goes by, brushing my hair back making the memory in my mind come to life as I feel the arrow's tail leave my fingers and open my eyes a second before it's head hits the target. It doesn't hit dead center, but I didn't expect it to. I got the second outer ring of the six around the circle in the middle. I feel... light. Free from a cage I didn't know was there. My mind is open, but also focused on the arrow.

It's amazing.

"Naruto?"

Hotaka's voice brings me back to the archery range at the temple in Benkei Village.

(Normal p.o.v)

Hotaka and the other monks watch with interest while the children standing off to the side watch in confusion and curiosity of the boy who was not of their temple or village standing with a bow and arrow notched as his eyes closed.

Hotaka can't help the smile spreading on his face as he notices how quickly the shinobi-in-training's stiff and alert posture relaxes. A gentle but swift wind blows through, blowing the boy's blonde spikes back from the goggles around his brow. The wind seems to relax the boy further. He can only imagine what is going through the young blacksmith's mind at this very moment.

The arrow is released and the boy's eyes open, as if waking from a dream, as the arrow strikes the second outer ring of the target.

Kurojiro laughs unmannerly and smug. "So much for the shinobi training!" He guffaws, gaining laughs from the other much younger and impressionable children.

Hotaka looks to him and scolds, "Kurojiro, a monk does not live off the misfortunes of others."

The children quieten at that and Kurojiro frowns, looking away abashedly but irritated of the scolding. Hotaka turns back to Naruto and notices the boy had yet to take his eyes off his arrow, but he doesn't look as displeased, as he and the other elder monks would've expected, but rather in a daze.

"Naruto?" Hotaka said questioningly.

Naruto blinks and shakes his head, as if to clear it before looking to the old monk, his stiff and alert shinobi posture back in place.

"Yeah?" He said.

"... How did it feel?"

Naruto thinks a moment before turning back to his arrow. His posture is still alert but relaxes slightly just looking at it. "It's like...''_Flying with Toothless while still on the ground._''Meditating." He said instead. "Just as free. Just as relaxing. But I'm not searching for any peace of mind because I'm already there."

The other elder monks look among themselves in interest and with smiles of approval as Hotaka smiles behind Naruto and nods to himself.

"Naruto!" Kiro's voice shouts from a the temple entrance. "Hey blondie, c'mon! It's time to get back!"

Naruto snapped back to full shinobi stance and handed to the bow he still had in hand to Hotaka. "Coming!" He called as he left with haste, ignoring the eyes staring after him.

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There was in fact no more work for the blacksmiths to do other than aiding the rest of the village with reconstruction. Naruto grew increasingly frustrated with being unable to work properly with his tool bag getting in the way. He nearly fell off of the roof he helped in fixing because of it! He wasn't thinking about using chakra for the manual work. His mind was all over the place since leaving the temple.

He was thinking about the work. He was thinking about the bandits responsible for the damage. He was thinking about Toothless. Wondering how his dragon was feeling stranded or if he was eating enough. Maybe he should build Toothless a tail that opens and closes through special mechanics.

He stood on the tiles, wiping sweat from his brow with his sleeve as his goggles hung around his neck. The tiles under his left leg were some he hadn't done himself and as he stood, his tool bag got caught on the tile ends and stuck. Not wanting to rip his bag at the caught seam, Naruto stepped on the tile to slip his bag loose. Then the tile had slipped under his weight. He fell, sliding head first going on his stomach towards the end of the roof. The thing that saved him was the ring of one of the cords on his belt for flying with Toothless getting caught on an old nail sticking up. Panting from the excitement and slight vertigo, hanging upside down four storeys up from the ground, his head finally cleared enough to turn himself right side up and focus his chakra to his feet to stand on the side of the building.

Dog showed up right when he unhooked the ring from the nail.

"Naruto, you okay?" The ANBU questioned in worry.

"Yeah. I'm fine." Naruto promised.

"Why weren't you focusing your chakra to your feet in the first place?"

'_I've gotten too used to no chakra flying on Toothless, I wasn't thinking about it or doing so without having to think about it._' Naruto thought bringing himself back up onto the roof. "I guess I just have a lot on my mind. I'm sorry, and after just scolding Tenten about taking this job seriously too."

"That is rather ironic. Well if you're okay, I need to get back to my own work."

Naruto only nodded and got to fixing the tiles broken in his fall when the ANBU left. He was paying more attention now and focusing his chakra to his feet this time but it was his belt practically saving his life that gave him another idea.

As soon as he was done with the work asked of him, he went back to the shop and got to adding clips, straps, and pockets with snap fastener buttoned covers onto his belt. This way, he could carry his tools everywhere, even when flying with Toothless, and not having to worry about dropping or losing anything. Like his ninja weapons pouch but with straps and a lot more pockets.

Night came around and the bandits didn't show up but that didn't put anyone at ease.

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Morning came and everyone got back to reconstruction as soon as they had woken and eaten.

Naruto was just waking up, sitting up, and stretching from where he'd fallen asleep at his temporary workbench. He rubbed the crust from his eyes and lifted his goggles from his neck to his forehead as he stood and stretched a bit more. He blinked down at the work table provided for him during his stay in Benkei and smiled at his finished and upgraded belt before fastening it around his waist and leaving the shop.

He didn't seem to notice the eyes he got for his belt from other villagers as he passed by to find Daisuke. He found him and Takato conversing by a broken wagon down the street from the shop.

"Ah, Naruto, I see you've woken up." Daisuke said with a smile before blinking confusedly at the blonde's belt. "What's that?"

"Like it?" Naruto asked with a grin. "I couldn't work very well with my tool bag getting in the way so I decided to improve my belt. I can carry my tools everywhere without worrying I'll drop something when getting a tool."

"That's really clever." Takato said eyeing the belt, impressed.

"Thanks." Naruto said proudly. "So what can I do?"

Takato pointed Naruto towards a building closer to the part of the village that was in ruins and explained how some men may need help as they were starting in rebuilding one of the restaurants that had been completely torn down in an attack. When Naruto got there, the men had just gotten the flooring and full framework inside and outside of the two storey restaurant finished along with some of the left side wall of the first floor. Naruto got to helping with the rest of the walling on the outside of the restaurant.

He could definitely say he was working much better with his tool belt than he was with his tool bag.

It was when he finished working on the back second floor wall of the restaurant and just getting down to the ground where he was approached.

"Young man, might I ask for some of your time?"

He looked up from brushing dirt and wood shavings from his pants to see an elderly woman with a pleasant smile. She had waist-length silver hair held half up with purple and gold chopsticks, about two feet taller than Naruto, a light but still noticeable amount of makeup, wearing a royal purple kimono covered in gold, lilac, and cherry blossom pink five-petal flowers, a dusty rose and pale pink obi around her waist with pink and white roses on it, white two-toed socks on her feet, and tall one-tooth Geta sandals that made her even taller.

"Uh, sure? Is there something I can help you with?" Naruto asked curious and confused.

"I am the seamstress in charge of the clothing shop of this village and I have had several people come to my shop requesting a belt like yours in the last couple of hours." She said. "But seeing as I am not the one who made or sold it to you, I had to turn away my customers."

"Oh, I'm sorry for the trouble." Naruto quickly apologized with a bow.

"Not at all." The woman said waving off his bowing. "I'm actually rather curious as to where you got it myself."

"Um... I made it last night." Naruto said honestly and slight embarrassed.

"Really?" She questioned surprised but now looking a bit impressed.

"Yeah. My tool bag was getting in the way as I worked and it wasn't until it got caught on some roofing tile and had me nearly falling off the roof that I came up with this." The blonde said gesturing to his tool belt.

"Oh goodness!" The woman gasped bringing a hand to her cheek in alarm. "Yes, I suppose bouts of panic can bring inspiration."

"Sometimes." Naruto said with a shrug. "Anyway, what was it you wanted?"

"Well, I'm actually wondering if you wouldn't mind coming to my shop so that I and my students and employees may make such belts equivalent to your own."

"Oh. Sure." Naruto said with a shrug.

The woman blinked with surprised. "Just like that?"

"Well, I'm a blacksmith and ninja in training." Naruto said. "If this belt is useful to me with the work I do in both areas, I imagine it may be more so for others. So why not?"

The woman blinked at the young blacksmith in surprise before it melted into another pleasant smile, this one a bit warmer than the

last. "You are quite humble for a boy your age. What is your name?"

"Naruto."

"How ironic someone so pleasant be named after something so violent."

"You got that huh?" Naruto said with amused smile. "Most people assume it's the kanji for fishcake rather than maelstrom."

The woman giggle amusedly. "Well that is the more common use for it. My name is Akemi. If you would please follow me."

Naruto did as requested and followed Akemi to a three story tall clothing store and sewing shop in the part of the village still standing. Bypassing the store on the first floor, Naruto was lead to the crafting and sewing room of the second floor. There were see-through fabrics of sunset colors hanging from the ceiling and shelf upon shelf of the fabrics and such made on the top floor. There were just as many girls and women here as their were men and boys on at the temple!

"Girls, girls!" Akemi called to the women working on the second floor. "This is Naruto. He is going to show us how he made his tool belt so that we can make our own."

There were excited chatters and pleased mutterings among the girls on this floor. Some of the younger girls and women giggled and blushed looking at Naruto. Naruto flushed lightly when he heard the words "cute" and "adorable", not used to such things being said about him.

"I want several of you to watch Naruto make a duplicate of his belt so that we make more more ourselves." Akemi said loudly for all to hear. "The young ones may observe but will be continuing with their own work."

This gain multiple "Ohh's" of disappointment and pouts from the younger seamstresses making Naruto's light flush darken before he shook it off.

"Now gather some fabric and thread for Naruto and a sketch pad and pencils for yourselves as Naruto works." Ameki lightly ordered.

Naruto shook his head again as the women scattered and Akemi showed him to a clear work station with measuring tape, charcoal to mark measurements, two tailor's dummies, one for men and one for women, needles for sewing, needles for pinning, and three pairs of different sized scissors.

"Um, not that I'm not grateful for the set up Akemi, but I'd rather do this with my own tools, if you don't mind." Naruto said sheepishly.

"Oh that's perfectly fine." Akemi assured him as some cloths and assortments were laid out on the table. "You do what you are comfortable with."

"Thank you. Okay..." Naruto said awkwardly looking over the cloth and thread.

He immediately picked out a thin but durable cloth that appeared to be made of deerskin and leather thread. He cut off what he needed with a kunai like usual and marked the places that needed to be sewn, buttoned, or buckled, beginning to forget that he wasn't alone in the room. He'd just finished sewing the pockets in place and was about to attach cords like those that held his saddle rings when he was brought out of his zone.

"What are those cords and rings for?" A woman asked. "Is it for a certain purpose or just to add style?"

"Oh, uh..." '_They're just the rings I attach to the hooks on the saddle on my dragon when we go flying. Yeah, I'm sure_ that'll blow over nicely with them_!' Naruto thought quickly for a reasonable excuse. "Um, I use ninja wire to climb walls when I don't want to over exert myself using chakra." '_Nice!_'"The cords are strengthened with ninja wire through the inside of the belt so it can hold my weight without snapping, the rings are for the ninja wire I use to climb to go through. We can use strengthened rope instead but the cords and rings will have to be bigger and thicker. Or we can put belt loops on the belt beneath the pockets so people can just put their own rope through that for climbing the walls."

The girls nodded in agreement, approval, and glee.

'_Phew!_ ' Naruto thought getting back to work. '_I got to start paying more attention to my surroundings as I work._'

Another few minutes later, Naruto stood back with a sigh as his observers came to gather closely around the male tailor's dummy were the tool belt Naruto made in front of them sat around the waist. The belt didn't have cords like Naruto's did, but rather extra strengthened belt-loops as he'd suggested but had just as many pockets and tool-straps as his own. The girls got to working on recreating the belts themselves, leaving Naruto to excuse himself to get back to reconstruction before being thanked by Akemi once more.

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Two days and nights have passed and still no attack has come.

Some of the villages had hope that maybe the bandits had gotten tired of repeatedly attacking the same village and left for good. Most however were more on edge than ever, starting to become paranoid that another attack may truly happen any minute.

Hours previous, Akemi started selling the belts that she and her seamstresses made like Naruto's and were sold as quickly as they'd been shelved and priced. Naruto saw duplicates of his belt being worn by nearly everyone. Most of which were aiding in reconstruction, some though had their own belt for whatever purpose they found it useful.

Naruto was in the workshop of the blacksmith's hut hammering the awkwardly bent metal steering frame of a hay cart when Akemi appeared before him again.

"Akemi, was there something else you needed of me?" Naruto asked lifting his goggles from his eyes to his brow with a smile.

"Not really, no." Akemi said smiling back. "I just wanted to thank you again for allowing my shop to copy your idea."

"It was nothing."

"Many would say differently."

"Well I came here to help a village in trouble." Naruto assured her.
"If making a tool belt helps, it's really nothing."

Akemi hummed pleased nodding to herself before reaching into the purple and pink floral purse that matched her kimono and took out a rather large wad of rolled up paper cash notes and handing it to Naruto.

"Wh-What's this for?" Naruto said gaping at the cash placed in his hand.

"It is your share of the belts we have sold thus far." Akemi said holding back a giggle at his expression.

"B-But all I didn't was show you how to make it! You, your employees, and students did all the work!" Naruto said looking up at her surprised.

"But you created it." Akemi in a pleasant but still final tone. "So it is only right you have your piece of the affluence."

"I... Thank you." Naruto finally said with a small smile.

Akemi merely gave him a nod and a smile before leaving back for her shop.

What Naruto didn't know was that Akemi had first gone to Daisuke to request Naruto's mailing address so she may have the blonde's share of the profit for future belts sold sent to him.

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6. Chapter 6

YES! I've finally updated. XD

**I finally got a USB to put all my stories and chapters on! (^-^)
Down side, I don't have another one. (TT~TT)**

Sorry it took so long guys. (^_^;)

**For those of you who didn't know, it was NOT because of writer's block this time. I couldn't type up and save anymore new chapters for anything without risk of something else being deleted or the story

not saving at all. If that weren't bad enough, a virus all but crashed my laptop and I had to use a friend's or my mother's computer to check emails and messages.**

**I just seemed to have the best of luck don't I?
(-_-;)**

WARNING!: Mentions of gore and blood among other things.

A/N: Sorry guys! felt the need to change the ranking just to be safe.

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Chapter Six

The Sandaime Hokage could not begin to explain just how annoying such ignorantly antagonistic the civilian half of the council was being over his decision to close the ninja academy for the time being.

Most of it at least.

Some, sadly so few in number, could grasp the concept at least and didn't let their opinion of certain individuals get in the way of the overall decision making. The rest, however, were not so wise.

"Lord Hokage, please, this ridiculous." One of the civilian councilmen halfheartedly pleaded. "There was no need to close the ninja academy for such... absurd reasons."

"The only thing I find ridiculous, at the moment, is that members of my council," the Sandaime said gesturing to the civilian half seated, "the people I trust to make fair and just decisions, be it by vote or otherwise, see nothing wrong with the academy instructors showing favoritism towards their students. Favoritism that may cost the lives of your own children in the long run for poorly made choices."

"Come off it Hiruzen." Koharu, one of the Sandaime's advisers and former teammates, scoffed. "Your only concern is for that... that boy."

"That is Lord Hokage to you." The Sandaime said looking to her sharply, making her slightly flinch. "While I'll admit, my closeness to Naruto makes me worry for him, I will not let my personal life get in the way of my decisions on what is best for the village as a whole."

"Then give the chÅ«nin instructors their vests back and reopen the shinobi academy." Homura, the Sandaime's other adviser and former teammate, said. "It's useless to hinder our future ninjas' learning even more."

"Why did you do such a thing anyway?" Danzo, the Sandaime old rival, said in a too-pleasant-too-be-true tone. "You yourself gave the decision making of our future generations' schooling to the civilian

half of the council. Why have you not included their decision in the closing of the ninja academy?"

"While it's true I gave the rights of what should be taught to future generations of ninja to the civilian half of the council that is only because those who do not or have not graduated are considered civilian themselves." Sandaime said flatly. "However, it is ultimately my decision, as Hokage, what chÅ«nin are fit to teach the future ninja in my service."

If Danzo's frown hadn't appeared, you wouldn't have noticed he'd been smiling before.

"ChÅ«nin instructors who intentionally change the outcome of the passing or failing grades of any students are not fit to teach." Hiruzen stated firmly. "Despite what any of you may be thinking, I didn't do this just because of Naruto. His and Sasuke Uchiha's cases were just the more popular bouts of bias treatment."

"Sasuke Uchiha?" A civilian councilman questioned immediately as the others sat up in interest as well.

"Yes." Hiruzen said with a frustrated sigh. "From what I've seen, Sasuke's learning is prevented by actions of inaccurate answers remaining uncorrected, over-praised actions, and crude choices remain unguided."

"Well that's not any reason to delay his learning." Councilwoman Haruno claimed.

"So you find it justifiable that Sasuke remains unaware of the difference between a kill and a knockout?" Sandaime asked skeptically.

"**What?!**" Most of the council, on both sides, gasped or exclaimed as the others conversed worriedly among themselves.

"Impossible!" Haruno exclaimed in shock.

"I assure you, it is not." The Sandaime said opening a thick folder in front of him and handing out papers to be spread and viewed by the council members. "These heedlessly corrected test papers and written physical tests are proof enough. And these are not just Sasuke's papers and notes but those of Naruto's, clan children, and civilian children as well. You'll find that favoritism was shown particularly towards civilian councilmen children over children from other civilian families."

"They didn't correct my daughter on the difference between a poisonous and edible plant. That could get her killed!" Councilwoman Haruno stated staring at her daughter's test paper in horror.

"Listen to this," Shikaku, Nara Clan Head, said. "Sasuke Uchiha showed elite skill in today's lessons. He will make Rookie of The Year upon graduation and be a great ninja afterwards. Naruto Uzumaki was kicked out of class again today. He will remain Dead Last upon graduation if he even graduates at all._ It doesn't even state why or the thesis behind this information. It has absolutely_ no detail on what the lessons even were that day. And how could this teacher

possibly know what their skill will be like two years from now?"

"You'll find that the only papers that are actually precise and detailed notes are the children from the Hyuuga, Aburame, Akimichi, Inuzuka, Nara, and Yamanaka Clans and very few civilian family students." Sandaime stated leaning his elbows on the table and twining his fingers together satisfied with this new development for now. "There is still a show of prejudice in the notes but it is not as obvious as it is for the other students."

"Shikamaru Nara is as lazy as any other Nara to come to the academy. He shows wisdom and excels in strategy but seems to favor his friendship with Naruto Uzumaki over his test scores._ What hell is that supposed to mean? That anyone who associates with Naruto isn't deserving of their grade?" Chouza Akimichi, Head of the Akimichi Clan, questioned skeptically. "I mean, sure, Naruto skips class with Shikamaru and my own son, but I know they don't let that get in the way of the work they're assigned."

"Uh... Chouza?" Shikaku said hesitantly. "There's something you ought to hear from me rather than read yourself."

"... What?" Chouza questioned, knowing by Shikaku's hesitation he obviously wasn't going to like it.

Shikaku clear his throat and read, "Choji Akimichi is just as... big boned... as any other Akimichi. While seeming determined to prove his worth as a ninja, it seems useless. If it weren't for his association with Naruto Uzumaki, he could prove to be a minor but still useful asset to the village. But as it goes, any intention he has of being a ninja is void._"

Chouza fumed where he sat. It was obvious that Shikaku replaced "big boned" with what was really written just so Chouza wouldn't completely lose his temper. But everything else that was written about Choji had him seething as it was.

"Hinata Hyuuga is rather useless despite her bloodline._" Hiashi Hyuuga, Hyuuga Clan Head, read in an even but still obviously livid tone. "She is rather timid and shy but shows promise when her focus is brought onto her lessons. She doesn't really associate with anyone but rather than being stand-offish as most Hyuuga, she seems more like a frightened animal. She has an unhealthy obsession with Naruto Uzumaki that may be the cause of this._ Now that is absurd."

"What makes you say that?" Councilwomen Haruno questioned. "It is no secret that your daughter is timid. My daughter once told me that she couldn't understand why Miss. Hyuuga would like Uzumaki over Mr. Uchiha."

"Because my daughter does not have an unhealthy obsession with Naruto Uzumaki." Hiashi said flatly. "I once questioned my daughter of her feelings and if they would get in the way of her lessons. She told me that she has noticed the looks Naruto gets from most of the villagers and some of the ninja, teachers included, and admires Naruto's determination to stand up and fight anyway. And what of your daughter?"

"What do you mean?" Haruno said with an eyebrow raised.

"_Sakura Haruno is rather brilliant and will surely be top kunoichi by the time she graduates. Her attraction towards Sasuke Uchiha may be a bit distracting in her physical work but she may prove to be the one to become the last Uchiha's wife._" Hiashi read stoically.

The other clan heads, even the Hokage, couldn't hold back a snort at this note.

"I don't see what's wrong with that." Haruno said assuredly.

"The chÅ«nin who wrote this note is obviously looking to be in your favor." Hiashi said flatly.

"Excuse me?" She said crossly.

"Lady Haruno, this chÅ«nin has fawning approval of your daughter's own unhealthy obsession."

"_Excuse_ me!" She exclaimed heatedly.

"Lady, it is no secret that the reason your daughter even tries to be a ninja is to get the Uchiha's attention." Tsume Inuzuka, Inuzuka Clan Head, said with a snicker. "Even some of her test papers reveal her obsession for answer-in-your-own-words questions. I don't need to know how to escape a hostage situation, Sasuke-kun will save me._ Does that sound promising to you?"

"Does she really say that?" Inoichi Yamanaka, Yamanaka Clan Head, asked surprised. "My own daughter has quite the fixation on the Uchiha but she doesn't let it affect her school work."

"Guess again." Tsume said a bit more seriously towards her fellow shinobi councilman, having a couple papers passed along the shinobi council side to reach him. "The essays both Ino and Sakura wrote for extra credit on their most recent test ties for the top spot on the creepy scale for their Uchiha-fetish. Sakura goes on and on about Sasuke being wonderful, his supposed accomplishments in class, what she sees on his private training grounds while in hiding, and what it would mean to be his wife in the future. There's nothing about being a ninja in the essay, at all. Ino's is slightly better, having written about the accomplishments of the Uchiha family but then it slowly starts turning into what she thinks she knows about Sasuke's accomplishments, what he likes in a girl, and how pretty she needs to be to show Sasuke she's perfect Uchiha spouse material."

Inoichi skimmed over both test essays once they'd been handed to him and sighs in disappointment at what he finds. "Seems I'll have to have a few words with my daughter about the seriousness of the shinobi lifestyle when I get home. I suggest you do the same Councilwoman Haruno. Both our daughters seem to think that the academy is a beauty pageant with Sasuke as the prize rather than the bridge to becoming a shinobi."

Councilwoman Haruno pinched her lips together to hold back the urge to argue on behalf of her daughter.

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Several days and nights had passed in Benkei Village since Konoha came to aid them and still no more attacks from the bandits had come.

Most of the demolished parts of village were rebuilt once more.

Those who had little hope of the bandits not showing up again grew more buoyant that the bandits had left their village alone for good and those on edge growing paranoid had begun to hope it true as well.

As much as he wanted to, Naruto had not gone back to the temple because of the reconstruction.

When Daisuke once again ordered him to take a break, he used it to study his mother's notes for chakra chains again. He realized why, or at least partially why, the seals were made to be like a bloodline that would not be transferred from parent to child. Once the seals were painted, the Uzumaki who painted the seals would have to continuously focus their chakra for twelve hours and could not stop the flow of chakra at all, not even for half a second, or else the seals would not work the way they are supposed to.

Unless the chakra is concentrated into the seals for a full twelve hours, the ability to create chakra chains would then only be temporary and, depending how long the person was concentrating their chakra into the seals, the ability to use chakra chains would only last from a day to a week or two before disappearing and could not be used by that person again unless they had Uzumaki blood in their veins.

Apparently, Naruto's father was one of the non-Uzumakis to try to gain chakra chains and even with his above average amount of chakra, he was only able to focus chakra for six hours or else he'd have died from chakra exhaustion. His ability to use chakra chains only lasted for a week and a half. He'd repainted the seals on his hands and feet but found the seals would not accept his chakra like they had before.

One of Naruto's great-great uncles tried later. Like all Uzumaki's, the uncle had huge reserves compared to the average ninja but was too old to continuously focus chakra into the seals for the full twelve hours. He made it to ten at least until he nearly passed out. He was able to use chakra chains for a little over two weeks and repainted the seals to try again. He only focused for two hours this time and, seeing as the seals still accepted his chakra, he found he was able to use them again though still only temporary.

Naruto wanted to paint the seals but decided against it for now seeing as no one was really sure the bandits wouldn't be back and he couldn't know what concentrating chakra into the seals for twelve hours straight would do to him. He didn't doubt that he'd be out of commission for some time afterwards though.

On the other days passed, he used his breaks to eat and drink like

the others. As soon as he was ready to get back to work though, Tenten would drag him to an open field for training as her grandfather said she could start her own break.

At first, she just wanted to spar again.

Only this time she wanted to spar her katana vs. the dian sword he fixed but did not create.

She still lost.

Tenten supposed she could only be thankful Naruto was not the type to gloat... most of the time. In the later days though, she would drag him away for training stating it was time he take ninja lessons seriously. At least... that's what she would say. In reality, she wanted to see how good he really was and just how much more the dobe a year under her was skilled than her.

Neither noticed Cat watching from the trees with a shake of her head in amusement during these training sessions just as she didn't notice the other watcher looking on just as amused.

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As the second week of the Konoha residents' stay in Benkei came to an end with the setting sun, all hope the villagers gained in thinking the bandits had left for good had gone with it.

Apparently the reason the bandits had not come for a week was because they were recruiting more members to take over and destroy the village and even the numbers with the more experienced warrior monks.

BOOM! *CRASH!* *GLASS SHATTERING!*

The sound of an explosion hitting a, thankfully, empty house seemed to be the signal to start chaos.

Naruto shot up from where he sat fixing some door hinges in the forge when it began. Takato unwound his chain whip from his waist, Kiro brought out a pair of emei piercers from where they'd been hidden in the back of his overalls, and Genki seemingly opened his narrowed eyes bringing out a bo staff from seemingly out of nowhere. All three left their work stations and ran out to defend their village with the warrior monks.

"Naruto, find Tenten and make sure to get the other villagers to the safe houses at the temple!" Daisuke ordered.

"Right!" Naruto said running out as ordered.

He'd just barely avoided being part of an explosion leaving the shop. Refusing to look over his shoulder at the damage, Naruto sprinted down the street in the direction of the temple, stopping from time to time to help some villagers fleeing from their homes.

"Is this how bad it was before?!" Naruto asked a villager over the chaos.

"No!" The man said angered but fearful. "They have more members to

their group and there weren't as many bombs as there are now!"

"_ART IS A BANG!_"

Naruto only had time to duck with the villager when another bomb was thrown, destroying the house they'd just left.

"Go and get your family to cover!" Naruto ordered as he ran through the village.

He'd only gotten to the end of the street when he was stopped by Dog.

"Naruto, you have to take cover with the villagers!" The Anbu shouted over another explosion.

"I can't! I have to find Tenten!" Naruto shouted back as they leaped behind a brick building for cover.

"She's already with them! Get as many villagers to follow you along the way, some of these bandits are missing-nin! Now get to the temple, hurry!"

Naruto nodded and they both sprinted in different directions. Naruto towards the temple and Dog towards the front lines of the chaos.

Naruto had just passed the line of buildings separating the third of the village in reconstruction and the third still standing when he saw Tenten rushing a group of children from the chaos only to be confronted by a monster of a man.

He was eight feet tall at least and his muscles looked to be straining against his skin which was riddled with blade slash and whip scars. His head all but shaved, he wore an open brown keikogi and black slacks, flat Geta sandals, a blunt hunting knife in hand, his bloodshot crossed eyes a brown that looked red, his grin showing his yellow cracked teeth taking up the lower half of his face...

Naruto wasn't sure if this man was a bandit or a missing-nin but the crazed look in his eye staring at the children in front of him was enough to know that just killing them would've been mercy in comparison to what he was planning.

"Look at all those pretty eyes..." The man said licking his lips with a crazed grin.

Nuff said.

Naruto threw kunai and ninja wire to surround the man, bloodying the man's ankles as he tied them together and made him fall face first to the dirt when he tried to approach the children and Tenten.

"Let's go!" Naruto shouted running past the downed man and rushing Tenten and the children up the steps.

Another explosion hits one of the huts near Akemi's shop as they hurry the younger children up the stone steps to the temple and shrine.

They had nearly reached the top when Kurojiro leaped down from the top of the stairs and landed in front of the group with a scowl.

"What do you think you're doing outsider?" He all but demanded.

"Not now!" Naruto said trying to push past him only for Kurojiro to grab his arm.

"No. I demand to know what it is you think you are doing!"

"Bringing the children to safety at the temple, okay?! Now let go!"

"No! No one is allowed on the temple grounds during an attack!"

"Are you kidding?!" Naruto exclaimed in disbelief and rage. "It's the safest place in your village and you deny safe haven to children?!"

"... Rules are rules." Kurojiro said with a smirk out of spite.

Naruto just stared at the older boy before glowering, "Yeah well some rules are meant to be broken!" Naruto shouts before socking him in the eye so hard it sent Kurojiro off the steps, rolling down the hill, and into a bush.

This wasn't the time for an argument with an overgrown child, the kids needed to be taken to safety.

So as soon as Kurojiro was out of the way, Naruto rushed Tenten and the children up the last few steps and to the nearest safe house.

'No one allowed here during an attack my ass!' Naruto couldn't help mentally scoff at the sight of the dozens of safe houses.

Tenten and Naruto had the children enter the safe house first. The children, in their fear pushed and shoved, knocking others to the ground. Naruto and Tenten were quick to get those who'd been pushed back to their feet and got them inside before Tenten and Naruto followed. Naruto hurriedly latched down the locks on the metal framed wooden door before crouching slightly to peek out the keyhole beneath the door handle, hoping none of the bandits had been able to reach the temple as they hadn't before.

Unfortunately, with the added number of bandits, the monks were too busy defending the village to guard the temple. This left the duty of guarding the entrance to Kurojiro alone as one of the eldest of the students while the other students were hiding in the safe houses with the villagers as their teachers ordered. With Kurojiro out of commission for the time being, no one was there to stop the bandit who'd targeted the children from entering the temple grounds.

The bandit noticed a doll dropped onto the ground just outside outside the safe house Naruto, Tenten, and the children just entered. Naruto, seeing the bandit looking at something on the ground, shifted

to change the angle of his view. Naruto saw the doll as well before looking back to the bandit to see a predatory smirk stretch across his face as his crazed eyes lifted from the doll to the door. Naruto started hissing curses under his breath and quickly places paper security seals over the locks and hinges before turning to scan the inside of the safe house to see if there was another door for situations like this.

There wasn't that he could see.

There were barrels of grain, water, sacks of rice, boxes of dried meats and fruits, pots, pans, and other utensils at a small fire pit, several other things to allow the large one-room house to be safe for a time for multiple people... But no other door.

"Is there an emergency back door in here?" Naruto whispered to the children.

"This is a safe house." An older child said confused at the question.

"There's no need for an emergency back door in the safe houses of the temple." Another younger child said just as confused.

Naruto groaned in frustration fighting the urge to pull at his hair before shaking it off and growing a new bout of determination. If there wasn't a door to get these kids out of the "safe house" they're now trapped in, then he'll just have to make one. Naruto goes to the other side of the safe house and pushes a barrel of grain away from the wall just when the bandit reaches the door.

"It's inevitable blonde boy!" The bandit shouts excitedly, making the children jolt in fear, some even squealing and crying. "You caught me off guard with that ninja wire, I'll admit, but the fight only makes me want to break your spirit all that much more!"

* _BAM!_*

The sound of the bandit slamming his hand against the door made the children scream in fear and the bandit cackled insanely at the reaction. Naruto didn't let any of this distract him as he motioned for Tenten to help him carve out a hole in the wall big enough for the children to escape through.

"You don't know who I am!" The bandit continued tauntingly with an amused cackle.

* _BAM!_* * _BAM!_*

"You must not, that's why you're not afraid! That's okay, though! I'm Tonpa! I used to want to be a ninja too! I came from Grass! But I was too big a fan of Mist and the way they promoted genin way back when before that Momochi bastard got them to disband it!"

* _BAM!_* * _BAM!_* * _BAM!_*

"_Yoohoo!_" The bandit, Tonpa, cheerfully said. "You listening in there blondie?!"

"Yeah, I HEAR YOU!" Naruto shouted letting his anger and disgust in

the man be heard as Tenten unsealed a pair of her tomahawks to started hacking at the wall.

The bandit cackled again. "Well good! You see I thought I could pass the same way he did but with my own style! I took the first years to my house one by one, every month for the year I was supposed to graduate and become genin. I lived with my mama but she hung herself after killing my pap! See, he had to rape her a few dozen times to have me and with me in my last year of the academy, he wanted another kid! Mama didn't want another kid so she killed him. First time I'd ever seen so much blood and I was doused in it!"

Naruto felt ready to throw up at how the man ecstatically explained why he was so messed up in the head. He was happy he got the children to cover their ears after the bandit said he wanted to graduate like Momochi Zabuza, Demon of the Bloody Mist, with his own flare. He just wished he and Tenten could afford to do the same. Tenten didn't look much better then he did in reaction to the bandit's words.

* _BAM!_* * _BAM!_* * _BAM!_*

"I actually thought it was funny!" Tonpa cackled again, slamming his hand against the door a few more times. "Mama was such a mouse of a woman! She would jump at the sound of a leaky facet dripping like it'd attack her! Seeing her covered in Pap's blood with that big smile made her look so pretty! But then she took one look at me and she was a mouse again! She hung herself while I was at the academy the next day. Silly me! I'm getting off track! So anyway, I wanted to have fun like Mama did with Pap to become a genin. I would corner them like the mouse my mama was, let them squeal and scream as I scared them into one spot... The ones who fought back or tried to were always the most fun... I would... I would start with their arms first... to let them know they couldn't fight me forever... I wouldn't let them keep anything above the elbows before I move to their legs... That was to let them know that now that they can't fight me, they can't run from me... The blood... So much bloooood coming from their tiny little bodies... Seeing the life flood out their eyes like the blood... They looked just as pretty as Mama... You'll all look soooo pretty..."

* _BAM!_* * _CRACK!_* * _CRACK!_* * _BAM!_* * _SLAM!_* * _CRACK!_* * _BAM!_* * _BAM!_*

Tonpa starts slamming his body against the door when most of the children are already out. When the last one slips through, Naruto shoves Tenten out and doesn't give her the chance to get back in as he shoves the barrel of grain in front of the hole. He turns to face the door just when the paper seals break, letting Tonpa throw the door open. Tonpa seemed angry at first when he saw that all the children he'd been expecting weren't there but could stop the smile on his face at the sight of Naruto back up against the barrel.

"Awww... Did the little ninja think he could trap me?" Tonpa asked amused.

Naruto didn't answer, he just swallowed as much of the fear he could manage, though he knew it still showed. But despite his fear, he was more determined to let Tonpa believe he wasn't just the distraction

for Tenten to get those kids to safety.

"That's alright." Tonpa said leisurely approaching closer with his dull hunting knife ready. "You're a fighter but you cornered yourself for me... This'll be fun... Those pretty eyes will look so much more pretty when I'm done... When they tried to kill me for doing what I thought best to become a genin, they thought they could trap me too... The chÅ«nin they sent after me weren't nearly as pretty as the academy students, but they still gave me some fun..."

Tonpa was too busy talking and staring at Naruto's "pretty eyes" to notice Naruto's hand slip behind his back, taking out a kunai and wrapping a paper bomb around the handle.

Tonpa attacked first, slashing towards Naruto's shoulder. Naruto was quick to dodge but struggles to block the next attack and has to jump to the side because Tonpa's just too strong. He dodges left and right but then has no choice but to turn and duck when he's forced into a corner and can't dodge or block. He can't risk the paper bomb getting stuck or smudged before he's ready and he hasn't had the chance to arm himself with a kunai for his left. Naruto is able to partially block the down-slash to his left elbow but his left eye was slashed in the process.

Naruto shouts in pain and palms his eye on impulse. The pain distracted Naruto and Tonpa was able to grab Naruto's left wrist.

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About three miles away, just on the borders of Benkei Village in a clearing, a sleeping dragon sits up with a jolt and disappears.

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Tonpa backs up with satisfaction, wanting to take his time, savor the kill, the torture of his latest victim who's fighting more than any of his tougher victims ever have. Tonpa is amused that Naruto is still standing, staring at him with one good eye, his kunai ready now to block another attack defiantly, while blood dripped from his closed left eye and what remained of his left arm, hacked off at shoulder down by his duller hunting knife.

"So lovely... and yet so frail..." Tonpa crooned with stars in his crazed and blood thirsty eyes. "Like a butterfly with a torn wing yet so determined to fly again... You've not graduated academy yet, but still you are sooo... vigorously good with pain..."

He took a taunting step forward and grinned with a light cackle when Naruto flinched back on reflex. Tonpa feigned attacks to make Naruto jumpy and it worked, but Naruto was at least able to duck and roll with the next real attack towards his right. With all his boasting, Tonpa didn't seem to understand he'd given Naruto all he needed to know how to get out of this alive. He would pretend to attack left but because he'd already did what he'd wanted to Naruto's left, he'd really attack Naruto's right.

When Tonpa readied another attack, Naruto took his chance.

The blonde got in close, throwing his kunai into the dirt at Tonpa's feet as a distraction, pulled out a second kunai and stabbed it into Tonpa's wrist of the hand gripping the hunting knife. When Tonpa dropped the knife with a shout of pain, Naruto ducked and grabbed the kunai in the dirt before throwing it into Tonpa's throat just when Tonpa pulled the second kunai from his wrist. With a wet choking gasp, Tonpa grasped his bleeding neck with the kunai still in it so more blood wouldn't flow. His eyes glared down at Naruto with insane rage now. With harsh wet gasps of breath, Tonpa lifted the kunai with a bleeding wordless yell ready to charge at Naruto, when the wall of the former safe house behind Tonpa was blasted off with a flash of bluish white fire like a lightning strike.

Toothless appear between them from where the wall and some of roof used to be, hissing and growling at Tonpa. Naruto decided not to question why or how his dragon had gotten to Benkei but rather just hopped up onto the saddle.

"Go Toothless!" Naruto shouted dazedly.

His will alone is what kept him from passing out in blood loss already.

With that, Toothless took off vertically and when they were high enough, Naruto whispered a breathless, "Boom."

He didn't look back to see the damage done with the answering blast.

Tonpa would've been seriously, if not fatally, injured had the tag been on the wall of the safe house, but the blonde very much doubted he'd survive a paper-bombed kunai to the neck.

But Tonpa must have had his own means of explosives on him because the blast was bigger than it should've been from one paper bomb. The shockwave of the blast sent them higher and lit the leather of Toothless's replacement tale-wing aflame.

Naruto sees this when he finds they weren't flying in control anymore. '_Damn!_' He mentally cursed as gravity came into play and Naruto feels himself slipping from the saddle. '_Why didn't I think of making it fireproof?!_'

They fell and Toothless is able to turn midair to wrap around Naruto protectively before they crash to the ground.

The last thing Naruto heard before slipping out of consciousness, was Tenten shouting his name.

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He'd been sent to this village to pick up a new recruit from the cells beneath it, guarded by warrior monks. The recruit had been a bomber for hire in the bandit group attacking Benkei but he was still a missing-nin. He was not told there would be Konoha Anbu here.

He stuck to the shadows, making his way to the cells when Anbu Dog ran right past his hiding place carrying a very familiar blonde boy in his arms in a rush. If that didn't surprise him enough, the dragon wearing a saddle hurriedly following Dog did.

There wasn't any hurry to get Deidara from the village jail cells, not really.

He followed Dog and the dragon to a small medical house and overheard the doctor saying Naruto's eye had to be removed as the damage done was irreparable and that Naruto was just lucky he hadn't died from blood loss after his arm was hacked off.

Naruto could be a ninja just fine with one eye. One arm, however... Naruto was clever, but the council would use it as the perfect excuse to disband Naruto from attending ninja academy any longer. Anyone who knew Naruto knew any and all civilian's would make his life more miserable than it was already if he couldn't be a ninja.

He waited until Naruto was alone before entering... Well almost alone.

Hsss!

And it seemed he wouldn't be alone if the dragon had anything to say about it.

"I won't hurt him." He told the, supposedly extinct, creature. "I want to help him."

Toothless kept his narrowed and thinly slit eyes on the man, but decided to let him be. The man looked over the blonde lying in a hospital bed with a few blood bags hooked up to him for transfusion. Naruto was shirtless and was missing most of his left arm. What was left of it had been bandaged up along with the upper left side of his face. Despite the blonde's most recent horrific encounter, he seemed peaceful.

The man took out a small scroll and unsealed a pair of eyes with a fully developed dojutsu. Shisui made him promise to put his eyes to good use. The man doubted this is what his friend had in mind, but it was as good a use as any.

Using his chakra and Mangekyou Sharingan, he combined the two eyes into one, the power of two as one, and removed the bandaging covering Naruto's empty eye socket.

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WARNING SPOILER ALERT!:

Before some of you curse at my creating yet another fanfic where Naruto has Sharingan, Naruto WILL NOT be having a Sharingan in this story. You will see what happens in the next chapter.

End
file.